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Agenda item 107

PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

Reformulation of activities under sections 9 and 10 of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 pursuant to General Assembly resolution 48/228 A

Report of the Secretary-General

1. Upon its review of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995, the General Assembly, in section I, paragraph 23, of its resolution 48/228 A of 23 December 1993, requested the Secretary-General, inter alia:

(a) To reformulate activities under section 9 (Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis), programme 1, subprogramme 5, in order to reflect all the aspects of the pertinent resolutions, as well as the relevant mandates of programme 21 (Public adminstration and finance) of the medium-term plan, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session;

(b) To reformulate activities under section 10 (Department for Development Support and Management Services), programme 2, in accordance with the relevant mandates of programme 21 of the medium-term plan, and to report thereon to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session.

2. The present report is submitted in response to that request. It contains the proposed revised programme narrative, under section 9, programme 1, subprogramme 5, and revisions to section 10, programme 2, of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/48/6/Rev.1).

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Section 9. Department for Economic and Social Information and Policy Analysis

3. The following text replaces the programme narrative contained in paragraph 9.36 of document A/48/6/Rev.1:

"Subprogramme 5. Public economics: global approaches to micro-economic issues and policies

"9.36 The General Assembly, in its resolutions 46/166, 47/171, 47/187, 48/180 and 48/181, requested the Secretary-General both to strengthen operational activities and to enhance research and policy analysis on a number of matters relating to the role of the market in national economies. Those resolutions reflect the increasing recognition of the positive role of the private sector in promoting resource mobilization and securing economic efficiency and growth. However, in order to achieve those objectives, market-oriented policies also need to take into account the consequences of market imperfections and of the failure of the market to respond effectively to some key public concerns (such as some of those addressed in Agenda 21 and in the agenda of the World Summit for Social Development). Governments also need to develop policies for instances in which market-oriented polices are not appropriate. The subprogramme will examine the role, potential and shortcomings of market solutions to selected aspects of growth and development. It will involve the global examination both of measures that are intended to promote the development of markets and of the role of the market in meeting social concerns. In this way, it will contribute to the identification of policies that enable Governments to make effective use of markets to respond to the needs of society and to take alternative action where such an approach is not feasible. More specifically the programme of work for the biennium will include quantitative analysis and policy-oriented studies on the workings of market mechanisms, the role of regulation and deregulation, and privatization in the context of economic reforms in developing countries, developed market economies and economies in transition; research on the political economy of social security and safety nets in different regions and countries; studies on the role of the firm, demonopolization and other relevant policies intended to increase the efficiency of markets; determinants and effects of the location of economic activities; meeting information needs of Member States on the functioning of markets and related issues and problems that arise from the incidence of market failure.

"Activities

"1. Parliamentary services (regular budget)

"(a) Parliamentary documentation: reports to the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council on policy-oriented analysis of such issues as (i) entrepreneurship, privatization, demonopolization and administrative deregulation; and (ii) economic management in the economies in transition and their integration into the world economy;

"(b) Ad hoc expert groups: one ad hoc expert group to examine social security arrangements and social safety nets.

"2. Published material (regular budget)

"Technical material: (a) selected aspects of the international dimension of national labour markets; (b) ownership and pricing of natural resources; and (c) the effectiveness of alternative social security arrangements and social safety nets."

Section 10. Department for Development Support and Management Services

4. The narrative of programme 2 (Public administration and development management) under section 10 (Department for Development Support and Management Services of the proposed programme budget for the biennium 1994-1995 (A/48/6/Rev.1) should be modified as follows:

Paragraph 10.34 (1) Replace the first sentence with the following:

"During the biennium 1994-1995 the emphasis of this programme will be placed on the strengthening of the administrative and financial systems for development of developing countries according to their development priorities."

(2) Replace the third sentence with the following:

"Particular attention will be given to working with least developed countries, especially in Africa. Attention should also be given to the countries in transition to a market economy."

Paragraph 10.35 Replace the second sentence with the following:

"New mandates arising from the most recent resolutions of the General Assembly are also included. The proposals below are divided into six special areas instead of into subprogrammes."

Paragraph 10.36 (1) The heading should read

"(a) Public sector management systems";

(2) Replace the text of paragraph 10.36 with the following (changes from original text are underlined)

"10.36 During the biennium 1994-1995 emphasis will be given to effective public sector management and administrated reform through a holistic approach, incorporating relevant institutions from all sectors into

coordinated frameworks of development activities, with each institution and each sector assuming appropriate roles in policy development, implementation, monitoring and evaluation. Activities will include innovative approaches to public sector management with a view to catalysing development, strengthening human capacities, competing for greater efficiency, focusing on mission, funding of results rather than inputs and in particular transforming administration to be anticipatory, enterprising, decentralized and resource-efficient. Technical assistance will be provided to government institutions, including assistance concerning analysis, advice, equipment or training, in relation to specific requirements of the country's electoral process. Technical assistance activities would include the establishment and maintenance of civic and electoral registers, legal and logistic assistance, civic and voter education, communications, vote-counting technologies, public information and institution-building."

(3) In subparagraph (a), under the heading "3. Operational activities", replace the word "governance" by the words "public sector management".

Paragraph 10.38 In the first sentence, replace the word "privatization" by the words "assisting Governments in improving performance".

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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

SCALE OF ASSESSMENTS FOR THE APPORTIONMENT OF THE EXPENSES OF THE UNITED NATIONS

Programme budget implications of draft resolution A/C.5/49/L.4

Statement submitted by the Secretary-General in accordance with rule 153 of the rules of procedure of the General Assembly

A. Requests contained in the draft resolution

1. Under terms of operative paragraphs 1, 2, 3 and 5 of the draft resolution, the General Assembly would:

(a) Decide to establish an ad hoc working group of 25 experts in economics, finance, statistics and related fields;

(b) Invite the President of the General Assembly to appoint the experts in consultation with Member States, with due regard for equitable geographical representation, and to establish the working group as soon as possible;

(c) Decide that the activities of the working group shall be funded from within existing financial resources, but invite Member States to make voluntary contributions to fund the activities of the working group, including the costs of participation of their own experts appointed to it.

B. Activities by which the requests would be implemented

2. Should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.5/49/L.4, it is the understanding of the Secretary-General that the intergovernmental working group of 25 experts would serve in their individual capacity and would thus be entitled to travel and subsistence at the expense of the Organization.

3. The Secretary-General would convene, in early 1995, two sessions for a total period of four weeks in order that the expert group could study and examine all aspects of the implementation of the principle of capacity to pay, as the fundamental criterion in determining the scale of assessments for contribution to the regular budget. The views of Member States would be sought, as appropriate, as well as the cooperation of existing relevant intergovernmental institutions, such as the World Bank and the International Monetary Fund. Necessary documentation and services would be provided to the working group.

C. Additional requirements for 1994-1995

4. It is estimated that should the General Assembly adopt draft resolution A/C.5/49/L.4, the total requirements would amount to $987,200, based on the following assumptions:

(a) There would be 40 meetings of the working group during the four-week period, with two meetings a day;

(b) Interpretation and documentation would be provided in all languages of the General Assembly;

(c) For each meeting, there would be 2 documents consisting of 25 pages of pre-session documentation, 10 documents consisting of 10 pages each of in-session documentation and 1 document consisting of a total of 25 pages of post-session documentation.

5. These requirements may be broken down as follows:

	United States dollars
Travel and subsistence of participants to meetings	442 000
Conference-servicing requirements	545 200

D. Potential for absorption

6. As requested in operative paragraph 5 of the draft resolution, the Secretary-General would endeavour to meet the costs of servicing the session of the working group and the participation of the experts in the session of the working group from within existing financial resources. Since no provisions have been made in the programme budget for the 1994-1995 biennium, however, for the travel and subsistence of the experts appointed to the working group, the extent to which these costs could be met, will be determined at the end of the 1994-1995 biennium. The Secretary-General would welcome, therefore, voluntary contributions from Member States to fund the activities of the working group, including the costs of participation of their own experts appointed to it. A trust fund will be established for that purpose. In respect of conference-servicing requirements, it is anticipated that the session of the working group will be added to the calendar of conferences. The extent to which the

Organization's permanent capacity would need to be supplemented by temporary assistance resources can be determined only in the light of the calendar of conferences for 1994-1995. However, provisions are made under section 25 of the programme budget for 1994-1995, not only for meetings programmed at the time of budget preparation, but also for meetings that would be authorized subsequently, provided that the number and distribution of meetings and conferences are consistent with the pattern of meetings in past years.

E. Indication of additional requirements

7. Consequently, should the General Assembly adopt the draft resolution contained in document A/C.5/49/L.4, no additional appropriation would be required at this stage.

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HUMAN RESOURCES MANAGEMENT: OTHER HUMAN RESOURCES QUESTIONS

Amendments to the Staff Rules

Report of the Secretary-General

1. The Staff Regulations of the United Nations provide in regulation 12.3 that the full text of provisional staff rules and amendments shall be reported annually to the General Assembly.

A. 100 Series

2. Staff rules 100.1 to 112.8, which are applicable to all staff except technical cooperation project personnel and staff members specially engaged for service of limited duration, will appear as Secretary-General's Bulletin ST/SGB/Staff Rules/1/Rev.8. This document will promulgate a number of amendments intended to clarify existing provisions of the Staff Rules or effected for editorial purposes.

3. Staff rule 103.6, language allowance, is amended to clarify the conditions for the grant of a language allowance, and the circumstances under which a formal test may be waived.

4. Staff rule 103.14, salary advances, is amended to enable staff at duty stations where salaries are paid monthly, and not bimonthly, to receive a salary advance.

5. Staff rule 103.16, pensionable remuneration, is amended to align the Rule with the corresponding provisions of the Regulations of the Pension Fund.

6. Staff rule 103.20, education grant, is amended to clarify that short-term assignments do not give rise to an entitlement to the education grant.

7. Staff rule 103.24, definition of dependency, is amended for editorial reasons, and also to clarify that documentary evidence of support is needed if the child does not reside with the parents for any reason.

8. Staff rule 104.3, re-employment, is amended to allow for discretion in counting former service for seniority purposes. Former service should be counted only when the previous functions were relevant to the functions upon re-employment.

9. Staff rule 105.3, home leave, is amended to clarify the minimum period of time spent in the home country to satisfy the purpose of staff regulation 5.3.

10. Staff rule 106.2, sick leave, is amended to extend the deadline for production of a medical certificate from four to ten days, to regulate the reporting procedures for the approval of sick leave during a period of annual leave, to clarify that it is the Medical Director who determines whether a contagious disease occurring in the household is of such a nature as to endanger the health of colleagues, and to give the Medical Director discretion to place a staff member on certified sick leave in his/her own interests or in the interests of the Organization.

11. Staff rule 107.1, official travel of staff members, is amended to align the rule with the terminology used by the International Civil Service Commission.

12. Staff rule 107.18, computation of the travel subsistence allowance, is amended to clarify the applicable rate when more than one rate applies in the course of travel.

13. Staff rule 107.20, assignment grant, is amended to clarify the application of the grant when an initial short-term assignment is extended.

14. Staff rule 107.22, insurance, is amended to reflect the revised insurance limits established in May 1992.

15. Staff rule 107.27, removal costs, is amended to give the Organization discretion to recover a proportion of removal costs where a staff member, for reasons not attributable to the Organization, does not complete the minimum period for which removal costs have been paid.

16. Staff rules 110.5 and 110.6, disciplinary procedures, are amended to provide greater procedural flexibility in the establishment of ad hoc Disciplinary Committees at duty stations or missions where there is no established staff representative body.

17. Staff rule 109.1, definition of termination, is amended to define abandonment of post.

B. 200 Series

18. The text of the correlated amendments to staff rules 200.1 to 212.7, applicable to staff specifically recruited for service with technical cooperation projects, will appear in bulletin ST/SGB/Staff Rules/2/Rev.8, and are reproduced in annex II to the present report.

ANNEX I

Chapter III

SALARIES AND RELATED ALLOWANCES

Rule 103.6

Language allowance

Rule 103.6, as amended, reads as follows:

"(a) A staff member in the General Service, Security or Trades and Crafts category, or in the Field Service category up to and including level 5, shall be paid a language allowance if he or she has demonstrated proficiency in any two official United Nations languages, unless the entitlement is specifically excluded in the appendix B to these rules applicable to the duty station or in the conditions of service for locally-recruited staff at special missions. Staff members whose mother tongue is an official language of the Organization must pass the prescribed examination in another official language, which may be the language in which proficiency is required for their job, in which case the language proficiency examination in the mother tongue may be waived. Staff members whose mother tongue is not an official language must pass the examination in a language other than that in which proficiency is required for their job. A second language allowance shall be paid for proficiency demonstrated by passing the prescribed test in a third official language. No staff member shall be paid a language allowance for more than two official languages."

Rule 103.14

Salary advances

Rule 103.14, as amended, reads as follows:

"(a) Salary advances may be made to staff members under the following circumstances and conditions:

"(i) Upon departure for extended official travel or for approved leave involving absence from duty for two or more pay days, at duty stations where salaries are paid bimonthly, or a minimum period of seventeen days including one pay-day, at duty stations where salaries are paid monthly, in the amount that would fall due for payment during the anticipated period of absence."

Rule 103.16

Pensionable remuneration

Rule 103.16, as amended, reads as follows:

"(a) The pensionable remuneration of a staff member shall, except as provided in paragraph (c) below, be in accordance with articles 1 (q) and 54 of the Regulations of the United Nations Pension Fund."

Rule 103.20

Education grant

Rule 103.20, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(b) A staff member who is regarded as an international recruit under rule 104.7 and whose duty station is outside his or her home country shall be entitled to an education grant in respect of each child in full-time attendance at a school, university or similar educational institution, provided the assignment is for a minimum of six months, or, if initially for a period of less than six months, is extended so that total continuous service is at least six months. If such a staff member is reassigned to a duty station within his or her home country, he or she may receive the education grant for the balance of the school year, not exceeding one full school year after his or her return from expatriate service. The Secretary-General may also authorize payment of the education grant, during mission service of not less than six months, to a staff member regarded under rule 104.6 as a local recruit at his or her normal official duty station ..."

Rule 103.24

Definition of dependency

The second part of rule 103.24, paragraph (b), regarding certification of main continuing support, is renumbered as paragraph (c), and, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(c) A staff member claiming a child as dependant must certify that he or she provides main and continuous support. This certificate must be supported by documentary evidence satisfactory to the Secretary-General, if a child:

"(i) Does not reside with the staff member;

"(ii) Is married; or

"(iii) Is regarded as a dependant under the special conditions referred to above."

Present paragraph (c) becomes paragraph (d).

Chapter IV

APPOINTMENT AND PROMOTION

Rule 104.3

Re-employment

Rule 104.3, as amended, reads as follows:

"(a) A former staff member who is re-employed shall be given a new appointment or, if re-employed within twelve months of being separated from service or within any longer period following retirement or disability under the Joint Staff Pension Fund Regulations, he or she may be reinstated in accordance with paragraph (b) below. If the former staff member is reinstated, it shall be so stipulated in his or her letter of appointment. If he or she is given a new appointment, its terms shall be fully applicable without regard to any period of former service, except that such former service may be counted for the purpose of determining seniority in grade. However, where a staff member of the United Nations common system is granted a new appointment within twelve months of separation, any entitlement, benefit or accrual the staff member may have when separated for a second time should be adjusted in such a way that the total payments for the first and second separation do not exceed the amounts which would have been paid had the service been continuous."

Chapter V

ANNUAL AND SPECIAL LEAVE

Rule 105.3

Home leave

Rule 105.3, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(l) A staff member travelling on home leave shall be required to spend no less than two calendar weeks, exclusive of travel time, in his or her home country. The Secretary-General may request a staff member, on his or her return from home leave, to furnish satisfactory evidence that this requirement has been fully met."

Chapter VI

SOCIAL SECURITY

Rule 106.2 (a) (vi)

Sick leave

Rule 106.2, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(a) (vi) Except with the approval of the Secretary-General, no staff member may be granted sick leave for a period of more than three consecutive working days without producing a certificate from a duly qualified medical practitioner to the effect that the staff member is unable to perform his or her duties and stating the nature of the illness and the probable duration of the incapacity. Such certificate shall, except in circumstances beyond the control of the staff member, be submitted in a sealed envelope to the Executive or Administrative Officer not later than the tenth working day following the initial absence from duty of the staff member. If the absence lasts longer than ten days, the Executive or Administrative Officer must be notified, preferably in writing, with a preliminary medical report for forwarding to the Medical Service.

"(b) When sickness of more than five consecutive working days occurs within a period of annual leave, including home leave, sick leave may be approved on production of an appropriate medical certificate or other satisfactory evidence. If the sick leave involves an extension of the approved period of annual leave, the Executive or Administrative Officer must be informed before the approved period expires, where practicable with the submission of a medical certificate. The request for approval of sick leave during annual leave must be submitted, together with a medical certificate or other evidence, immediately upon return to duty.

"(c) A staff member shall immediately notify a United Nations medical officer of any case of contagious disease occurring in his or her household or of any quarantine order affecting the household. In such a case or in the case of any other condition which may affect the health of others the United Nations medical officer shall decide whether the staff member should be excused from attendance at the office. He or she shall receive full salary and other emoluments for the period of authorized absence.

"(d) When in the opinion of the Medical Director a medical condition impairs a staff member's ability to perform his or her functions, the staff member may be directed not to attend the office and advised to seek treatment from a duly qualified medical practitioner."

Chapter VII

TRAVEL AND REMOVAL EXPENSES

Rule 107.1

Official travel of staff members

The final paragraph of rule 107.1 (b), as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"Should a staff member wish to visit his or her eligible family members residing at any other place, the travel expenses borne by the United Nations shall not exceed the maximum amount that would have been payable on the basis of travel to the place of home leave. The Secretary-General may establish special conditions for payment of these travel expenses in respect of eligible staff members serving at designated duty stations."

Rule 107.18

Computation of the travel subsistence allowance

Rule 107.18, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(c) If more than one rate should apply during the course of any one day or if the traveller completes his or her travel on the same day as he or she commenced it, the rate applicable for the area of destination shall be paid for that day, except that for the last leg of a return travel on official business the allowance shall be paid at the rate applicable to the last authorized place where the staff member spent the night."

Rule 107.20

Assignment grant

Paragraph (b) of rule 107.20, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(b) The amount of the assignment grant shall be equivalent to:

"(i) Thirty days of subsistence allowance at the daily rate applicable under subparagraph (c) (i) below; and

"(ii) Thirty days of subsistence allowance at half such daily rate in respect of each family member for whom travel expenses have been paid by the United Nations under rule 107.2 (a) (i), (ii) or (iii) and 107.3."

The above-mentioned amounts shall be calculated on the basis of the rate prevailing on the date of arrival at the duty station of the staff member or of the staff member's family member, as appropriate.

Where an assignment of less than one year, in respect of which daily subsistence allowance has been paid for six months or more under rule 103.7 (d) (ii), is extended to one year or more at the same duty station, the provisions of (i) above do not apply and only the lump sum portion under paragraph (d) will be paid.

Rule 107.22

Insurance

Rule 107.22, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(c) The cost of insurance of personal effects and household goods in transit (excluding articles of special value for which special rates of premium are charged) under rule 107.27 shall be reimbursed, up to maximum valuation of $80,000 for a staff member without a spouse or dependent child and $130,000 for a staff member with a spouse or dependent child residing at the official duty station. The United Nations in no case shall be responsible for loss or damage."

Rule 107.27

Removal costs

Rule 107.27, as amended, reads as follows:

Add the following new paragraph (h):

"(h) In cases where the staff member has not completed the period of service in respect of which removal costs have been paid, for reasons not attributable to the Organization, these costs may be adjusted proportionately and recovery made under conditions established by the Secretary-General".

Chapter IX

SEPARATION FROM SERVICE

Rule 109.1

Special Advisory Board, definition of termination, and abolition of posts and reduction of staff

Rule 109.1, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(b) Definition of termination

"A termination within the meaning of the Staff Regulations is a separation from service initiated by the Secretary-General, other than retirement at the age of sixty years or more or summary dismissal for serious misconduct.

"Abandonment of post is a separation initiated by the staff member other than by way of resignation and is not considered a termination initiated by the Secretary-General within the meaning of staff regulation 9.1 (a)."

Chapter X

DISCIPLINARY MEASURES AND PROCEDURES

Rule 110.5

Joint Disciplinary Committees

Rule 110.5, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(b) The Secretary-General may also establish ad hoc Joint Disciplinary Committees at these or other duty stations for a particular case or series of cases, or may substitute an alternate procedure that conforms to the requirements of due process at duty stations or missions where there is no established staff representative body."

Rule 110.6

Rule 110.6, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(g) Ad hoc Joint Disciplinary Committees shall be composed as follows:

"(i) At duty stations where there is an established staff representative body or bodies, ad hoc Joint Disciplinary Committees shall be composed, by the Secretary-General or an official designated by him or her, in a manner similar to that of standing Joint Disciplinary Committees, except that staff-appointed members may be substituted for staff-elected members. If no appointments are made within a period set by the Secretary-General, the designated official may make the appointments after consultation with the staff representative body or bodies.

"(ii) At duty stations or missions where there is no established staff representative body, the head of office or mission, after reporting the matter to the Secretary-General, shall constitute a panel from among staff present at the duty station to investigate the allegations and to recommend what, if any, disciplinary measure should be imposed. The panel members shall be selected with a view to ensuring that the rights of all parties are respected."

Chapter XII

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Rule 112.8

Effective date and authentic text of rules

Except as otherwise indicated and subject always to the provisions of regulations 12.1, 12.2, 12.4 and 12.5, rules 100.1 to 112.8 as published in the present revised edition (ST/SGB/Staff Rules/Rev.8) shall be effective 1 January 1995. The English and French texts of these rules are equally authoritative.

ANNEX II

Chapter III

SALARIES AND RELATED ALLOWANCES

Rule 203.7

Dependency allowances

In rule 203.7, paragraph (b) (ii), in fine, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"An individual claiming a child as dependant must certify that he or she provides main and continuing support. This certificate must be supported by documentary evidence satisfactory to the Secretary-General if a child:

"a. Does not reside with the individual;

"b. Is married; or

"c. Is regarded as a dependant under the special conditions referred to above."

Rule 203.15

Pensionable remuneration

Rule 203.15, as amended, reads as follows:

"(a) The pensionable remuneration of project personnel shall be in accordance with articles 1 (q) and 54 of the Regulations of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund."

Chapter VI

SOCIAL SECURITY

Rule 206.3

Sick leave

Rule 206.3, as amended, reads as follows:

"...

"(v) Project personnel shall immediately notify a United Nations medical officer of any case of contagious disease occurring in his or her household or of any quarantine order affecting the household. In such a case or in the case of any other condition which may affect the health of others or which, in the opinion of the United Nations medical officer, impairs the individual's ability to fulfil his or her functions, the individual may be directed not to attend the office. He or she shall receive full salary and other emoluments for the period of authorized absence."

Chapter IX

SEPARATION FROM SERVICE

Rule 209.2

Termination

Rule 209.2, as amended, reads as follows:

"(b) Abandonment of post is a separation initiated by the individual other than by way of resignation and is not considered a termination initiated by the Secretary-General within the meaning of staff regulation 9.1 (a) and rule 209.2 (a)."

Present paragraph (b) becomes (c) and present paragraph (c) becomes (d).

Chapter XII

GENERAL PROVISIONS

Rule 212.7

Effective date and authentic text of rules

Except as otherwise indicated and subject always to the provisions of regulations 12.1, 12.2, 12.3, 12.4, and 12.5, rules 200.1 to 212.7 as published in the present revised edition (ST/SGB/Staff Rules/2/Rev.8) shall be effective 1 January 1995 and shall supersede all previous rules applicable to project personnel. The English and French texts of these rules are equally authoritative.

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UNITED NATIONS COMMON SYSTEM

Comments by the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations

Note by the Secretary-General

The Secretary-General transmits herewith for consideration by the Fifth Committee a document submitted by the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA). This document has been submitted pursuant to the provisions of paragraph 2 (b) of General Assembly resolution 35/213 of 17 December 1980, whereby the Assembly reiterated its readiness to receive and consider fully the views of the staff as set out by a designated representative of FICSA in a document submitted through the Secretary-General.

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Annex

COMMENTS BY THE FEDERATION OF INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS' ASSOCIATIONS

1. The Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations (FICSA) is honoured to have the opportunity to present to the Fifth Committee of the General Assembly the views of common system staff on the recommendations of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) that are before the Assembly at its forty-ninth session. FICSA also takes this opportunity to place before the Committee issues that were not discussed by the Commission in 1994 and to make requests for action by the Committee to address those issues.

I. RELATIONS WITH THE INTERNATIONAL CIVIL SERVICE COMMISSION

2. In response to General Assembly resolution 48/224 of 23 December 1993, in which the Assembly regretted the continued suspension of participation by FICSA in the work of the ICSC and again urged that the Commission and the Federation work towards the re-starting of the dialogue between them, FICSA attended the thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions of ICSC, held during 1994. The decision to return to the Commission was not without controversy within the membership of the Federation and was inexorably linked to a request by FICSA for the inclusion in the ICSC agenda for 1994 of an item entitled "Review of the methodologies for surveys of best prevailing conditions of employment at headquarters and non-headquarters duty stations". That request was granted.

3. Thus, FICSA participated in the thirty-ninth and fortieth sessions of ICSC in good faith in response both to the appeal of the General Assembly and the assurances of the Chairman of the Commission. The issue of the review of the methodology for General Service salary surveys at headquarters and non-headquarters duty stations was indeed included in the Commission's agenda for its July session. The Commission, however, for reasons known only to itself, chose not to engage in a substantive discussion on this key issue. A similar lack of action was also evident during the discussions at those sessions on Professional salaries. More details on both General Service and Professional salary issues are provided in the paragraphs below. In the present context, it will suffice to state that the Federation's evaluation of its participation in the proceedings of ICSC has been so negative that it has led FICSA to question the very foundation of that institution in the United Nations common system. What is the use of a Commission which by its own rules of procedure allows staff representatives to include items for discussion in the agenda six weeks in advance of a given session and yet refuses to allot time for consideration of the item? Why was its secretariat unable to review the seven-page FICSA document during those six weeks? Why did the Commission wish to perpetuate the flaws in the methodologies by waiting until 1997 or 1998 to review the issue?

4. FICSA member associations/unions have taken stock of the situation and have expressed their disappointment with the process and results of both 1994

sessions of ICSC. A statement of no confidence adopted by the FICSA membership is reproduced below:

"Heads of delegations of FICSA member associations/unions attending an informal meeting in Paris on 26 and 27 September 1994 declared their complete loss of confidence in the integrity of the International Civil Service Commission (ICSC) and roundly condemned the Commission's refusal to engage in meaningful consultation with staff representatives.

"In response to an appeal from the General Assembly (resolution 48/224), FICSA had attended both 1994 sessions of ICSC, but its efforts to re-establish meaningful dialogue were treated with contempt.

"Consequently, the meeting recommended that the Executive Committee take the following immediate steps in the months leading up to the forty-eighth FICSA Council:

"(a) Pursue a policy of non-cooperation with ICSC and its affiliate bodies;

"(b) Set up a task force to draw up proposals for alternative mechanisms for the full and equal participation of staff in all negotiations concerning terms and conditions of service. This task force could include other bodies representing staff, administrations and Member States;

"(c) Mobilize support within the common system, using all means available, including legal action and an intensified programme of information and dialogue with Member States;

"(d) Strengthen relationships with other staff representative bodies in order to achieve, as far as possible, a united position on all essential issues;

"(e) Ensure that the dissatisfaction of the FICSA membership with ICSC and the absence of meaningful consultation/negotiation in the common system is consistently reiterated in FICSA statements to governing or inter-agency bodies."

A final decision on FICSA's future relationship with ICSC will be taken at the 1995 FICSA Council.

5. FICSA's disillusionment with ICSC is not only shared by the Coordinating Committee for Independent Staff Unions and Associations of the United Nations System (CCISUA), its sister federation, but is also apparent in the statements of the Administrative Committee on Coordination and the Consultative Committee on Administrative Questions (CCAQ). From statements made in these bodies, it is obvious that both the administrations and staff representatives fear that the efficiency and effectiveness of the United Nations system is being jeopardized by the lack of responsiveness of ICSC to current problems. In order to avoid similar situations in the future, FICSA respectfully submits the following requests to the Fifth Committee:

(a) That the General Assembly call for the establishment of a tripartite task force consisting of representatives of Member States, administrations and staff to explore alternative mechanisms for the consideration of conditions of service in the common system for recommendation to the General Assembly, which would ensure full participation of administrations and staff;

(b) That, in the interim period, the General Assembly instruct ICSC that whenever administrations or staff federations propose a discussion of a particular issue of the agenda of an ICSC session, ICSC should review the problem in substance after full consultation with staff and administrations;

(c) That the General Assembly review its resolution 35/213 of 17 December 1980, in which it decided that, to assist its deliberations, the Fifth Committee might, if considered desirable, invite representatives of staff to present their views. While FICSA remains appreciative of the opportunity to address the Fifth Committee on behalf of staff, the Federation would request the Committee kindly to revise the text to reflect the essential role played by representatives of staff in the process of determining terms and conditions of service in the United Nations system.

6. FICSA recognizes the final authority of the General Assembly in deciding upon terms and conditions of service, but believes that recommendations emanating from a tripartite body composed of all three parties would represent a more balanced and realistic basis on which to take decisions. This and other options could be examined by the proposed task force.

II. GENERAL SERVICE SALARIES

7. Chapter V of the report of ICSC for the year 1994 (A/49/30), relating to General Service remuneration, may well prove confusing to members of the Fifth Committee. On the one hand, the Commission noted that the substance of the questions [the questions raised by FICSA] had already been exhaustively and extensively addressed in the comprehensive review (1992) (para. 207) and, on the other hand, most members believed that the Commission would need additional technical guidance (para. 203) before it could consider FICSA's paper. If the Commission was fully au fait with what it was implementing in 1992, it should not require additional technical guidance in 1994. In its document FICSA identified several inconsistencies and errors in the methodology for determining General Service salary surveys which was approved by ICSC in 1992. Despite the views of some members of the Commission that the issue should not be reviewed at its fortieth session, others found time to study the document and, as a result, requested additional technical guidance from the ICSC secretariat. It can be deduced from this that a not insubstantial number of members of the Commission were unconvinced of the validity of the 1992 revised methodology. Unfortunately, as is often the case in the Commission, the vocal minority took control of events and forced a postponement of any substantive discussion. In the meantime, staff is expected to continue with a flawed salary survey methodology, thereby building into the system errors which will be difficult, if not impossible, to remedy once they have become entrenched.

8. During its fortieth session, the Commission also reviewed preparations for the Rome salary survey. The staff representatives and the administration of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) urged the Commission to organize the survey early in 1995 because FAO was in the process of restructuring. The revised classification of the General Service posts would have an impact on the survey results. Some members of the Commission refused to heed these arguments while others supported a postponement of the Rome survey. Once again, however, following a hasty and confused vote on the issue, the vocal minority were quicker off the mark and managed to resist a postponement. One of those members inferred that the suspension of the interim adjustment, due to Rome staff in June 1994, was the real objective in maintaining the reference date.

9. The Commission did not address the question of salary surveys which were boycotted by staff representatives. The Commission was informed by the FAO administration (in the case of Rome) and more recently by the United Nations administration (in the case of Geneva) that staff is not participating in either survey. Since the Commission has repeatedly stressed in the past that the participation of staff is crucial to the salary survey process, the FAO and United Nations administrations have questioned the validity of surveys conducted without staff participation.

10. In view of the experience gained during the fortieth session of ICSC, FICSA would appreciate it if the General Assembly could consider the following requests:

(a) To reject the decision contained in paragraph 208 (b) of the 1994 report of ICSC and instruct ICSC to undertake, during its forthcoming forty-first session, an in-depth review of the methodological flaws of the General Service headquarters and non-headquarters salary survey methodology identified by FICSA;

(b) To undertake new surveys in Paris and Montreal after the forty-first session;

(c) To instruct ICSC not to proceed with General Service salary surveys until such time as conditions are met for the full participation of staff representatives;

(d) To cancel the decision of ICSC to suspend the interim adjustment which was due for Rome in June 1994.

National Professional Officers

11. FICSA requests that all organizations making use of National Professional Offices or similar categories adopt a common grading structure, even if not all grades are used by all organizations at all duty stations. Since National Professional Officers are Professional staff, the quantification of outside benefits should include those offered to Professional staff in the private sector.

III. PROFESSIONAL SALARIES

12. In its resolution 46/191 of 20 December 1991, the General Assembly requested ICSC to complete and submit at the forty-ninth session a study leading to the identification of the highest paid national civil service. In paragraph 51 (a) of its report for 1994, the Commission proudly announced that it had made a number of decisions, although FICSA has not been able to identify any major decision regarding the review of the Noblemaire principle requested in resolution 46/191. The fact of the matter is that ICSC has blatantly failed to produce the study, thereby delaying information that is both vital and fundamental to improving the conditions of service in the Professional and higher categories despite appeals from the executive heads that they are unable to recruit and retain staff of the requisite calibre under present conditions. FICSA believes that this experience, combined with the ICSC ineptitude on the review of General Service salary survey methodology, demonstrates the inappropriateness of the Commission as the United Nations common system focal point for conditions of service.

13. The General Assembly, in resolution 46/191, also requested ICSC to monitor implementation of the Federal Employees Pay Comparability Act of 1990 (FEPCA), including the impact of its locality pay provisions in 1994. FICSA contends that the report of ICSC to the General Assembly does not provide an accurate report on the 1994 and 1995 locality pay adjustment and the Employment Cost Index (ECI) adjustment granted by the United States Congress under the FEPCA legislation. The Commission correctly states that, for 1994, ECI has not been granted. In the section dealing with FEPCA, the Commission does not refer to the 4.23 per cent locality pay adjustment granted to United States federal employees in Washington, D.C., from 1 January 1994 onwards. As far as 1995 is concerned, FICSA is aware that the Administration of President Clinton agreed to grant an ECI across-the-board increase of 2 per cent for all General Schedule employees and all special pay system employees! In addition, a substantial payroll increase of 1.24 per cent will be used for Washington, D.C., locality adjustments. On 7 November 1994, the Federal Pay Council (advisory board to the President of the United States in the Office of Personnel Management) announced that the 1995 FEPCA adjustment for Washington, D.C., will be 3.24 per cent. In 1996, the FEPCA adjustment is programmed for 6.26 per cent, yet such improvements in the comparator have been strangely absent in ICSC forecasts and/or present calculations.

14. FICSA does not believe that all the salary increases granted to United States General Schedule workers and to United States federal special pay agencies in 1995 have been fully reported by ICSC to the General Assembly. Since it is a fact that members of the ICSC secretariat regularly visit the secretariat of the Subcommittee on Compensation and Employee Benefits of the United States House of Representatives, it is difficult to comprehend why the report of ICSC is not more accurate as far as pay increases are concerned.

15. For all that the report is vague on the United States pay increases, it dedicates six pages to the local and relatively straightforward issue of the ad hoc measures for the Rome post adjustment (chap. VIII). In March 1993, six months after an abrupt devaluation of the Italian lire, ICSC introduced ad hoc measures to bring relief to staff facing unusual cuts in their take-home pay.

Eleven months later, the Chairman of the Commission suspended the special measures, despite evidence that the post adjustment had not yet recovered from the currency devaluation. The Commission is pleading for a consistent methodology ... to deal with such situations in a systematic manner (para. 390 (c)). FICSA submits to the Fifth Committee that such a methodology already exists for field duty stations. If the measures to be applied for bringing relief to field staff facing abrupt devaluations could be extended to headquarters' duty stations, there would not be a problem in Rome.

16. Another blow to the Commission's interlocutors present during the fortieth session was the unwillingness of the Commission to consider the full report of the Advisory Committee on Post Adjustment Questions (ACPAQ). The reasons given by the ICSC Chairman and one Commission member for not reviewing the report were (a) time constraints and (b) the absence of a French language version of the report. FICSA had expected that at its fortieth session ICSC would finally correct the errors made since 1990 in the computation of the pensionable element in post adjustment and would also take a decision on the reflection of housing data, car purchase and car insurance. The latter has been a major technical problem affecting the day-to-day management of the post adjustment and resulting in a loss of confidence by staff in the present methodology. In the case of Rome, for instance, no rationale was given by the Commission for suspending the special measures but it offered to undertake a place-to-place survey in September 1994 using the uncorrected, flawed methodology. The reason for utilizing the old methodology was that the Commission was unable to finalize the new methodology for place-to-place surveys and was unable to come to grips with the technical questions about external data collection at such short notice. The Commission thus decided instead to carry out the place-to-place survey as originally scheduled using the old methodology, which has been proved by ACPAQ to have serious shortcomings. It is therefore not surprising that out of the approximately 1,500 Professional staff posted in Rome, only four have participated in the September 1994 place-to-place survey!

17. FICSA therefore requests the Fifth Committee:

(a) To instruct ICSC to complete its review of the Noblemaire principle before 31 January 1995;

(b) To approve a 15 per cent across-the-board increase of Professional salaries effective from 1 January 1995 to take into account FEPCA increases reported in 1994 (4.23 per cent), 1995 (3.24 per cent) and 1996 (6.26 per cent);

(c) To instruct ICSC to share with administrations and staff representatives the results of the technical review on external housing data collection before 31 December 1994;

(d) To suspend all place-to-place surveys until the new methodology cited under subparagraph (c) has been finalized;

(e) To extend the special measures utilized for abrupt currency devaluation in the field to headquarters' duty stations.

IV. CONDITIONS OF SERVICE APPLICABLE TO BOTH CATEGORIES

Review of the level of the education grant

18. FICSA requests that the analysis of data used to review the level of the education grant be improved to reflect accurately actual expenses. The analysis is based solely on fee data and does not reflect capital assessment fees, registration fees, the cost of lunches and transportation. FICSA trusts that this issue will be addressed during the review of the education grant scheduled for 1997.

Hazard pay

19. FICSA would like to place on record its concern for field staff, particularly national staff, who appear to be more at risk than other categories of staff in a growing list of extremely hazardous duty stations. The criteria for classifying duty stations should be restated to reflect the current situation.

Security of field staff

20. FICSA has also made a number of proposals for improving the protection of field staff. Those proposals, which were submitted to the Administrative Committee on Coordination on 22 September 1994, are appended to the present document. FICSA respectfully requests the Fifth Committee to support FICSA's proposals, particularly those related to security arrangements for locally recruited staff members. With the support of the Fifth Committee, the United Nations Security Coordinator's office will be able to submit amendments to the United Nations Field Security Handbook. It is proposed that the evacuation arrangements for internationally recruited staff be extended to locally recruited staff. These amendments will, in the view of FICSA, make it possible to avoid in future tragedies such as the brutal killings of UNDP, UNICEF and UNHCR staff members in Rwanda.

21. The attention of the Fifth Committee is also drawn to paragraph 16 of the proposals, in which reference is made to the draft convention on the safety of United Nations and associated personnel. That draft convention aims to ensure better protection of peace-keeping personnel or personnel participating in operations which the Security Council or the General Assembly have determined pose exceptional risks to the safety of personnel. The draft convention has been discussed at length in the Sixth Committee of the General Assembly. Having had the benefit of a full briefing by one of the representatives, FICSA understands the problems associated with the principle of respect for the political sovereignty of Member States. FICSA hopes, however, that the convention will not result in double standards when the lives of staff are at risk. There should be no discrimination between Security Council operations staff and staff operating under other mandates in the United Nations common system.

22. FICSA requests the Fifth Committee to consider extending the protection of the above-mentioned convention to all staff members of the United Nations common system.

Taxation of staff

23. In document A/C.5/49/6 members of the Fifth Committee have inter alia received a detailed report regarding problems related to the taxation of international civil servants working at Geneva but residing in France. FICSA trusts that the Fifth Committee shares the concern of the staff and the Geneva-based organizations at the possibility that France will in 1996 impose income tax on the staff of ILO, ITU, WHO, WMO, WIPO and GATT who are employed at Geneva but are actually living in France. Since the Government of France is not considering any such taxation on staff of the United Nations Office at Geneva, it would appear that this would betray the principle of the common system and set a dangerous precedent.

24. FICSA would like the Fifth Committee to request France to reconsider its proposal.

Employment of spouses

25. FICSA would also like to bring to the attention of the Fifth Committee the outdated prohibitive rules regarding employment of spouses which are still being applied in most United Nations organizations. These restrictions not only constitute infringements on equal career opportunities for men and women but also represent a deterrent to the recruitment and retention of qualified married staff members in the specialized agencies. Joining one of the specialized agencies may, for nationals of some countries, entail a minor improvement in salary conditions for the Professional staff member, but it may also mean that a dual-income family is compelled by (a) the spouse employment restrictions in the agency and (b) the work permit restrictions in the host country to revert to single-income family status. It is well known that some host countries are more liberal with the labour situation of spouses of non-United Nations organizations, such as the future World Trade Organization, than with United Nations common system bodies.

26. FISCA requests the Fifth Committee to insist that the United Nations common system organizations lift restrictions against employment of spouses and to request host Governments to apply more flexible work permit rules.

Performance management: appraisal and recognition of performance

27. During discussion of the issue at the summer session of ICSC, FICSA fully supported the performance appraisal system designed for managers of the common system. Furthermore, the Federation felt that the system should also be applied to all staff of the system, thereby making everyone accountable for a successful implementation of organizational mandates. Leadership, team spirit and a sense of belonging would be several of the elements created by a prompt and complete implementation of the new system. The sole worry of FICSA was that individual organizations would not spend the requisite funds on training, a key element to the success of the performance appraisal system.

28. The Federation completely rejected any initiatives on the subject of performance pay. FICSA had long maintained that this type of pay system could not work in an international environment such as that of the United Nations.

Additionally, performance pay had been a miserable failure where implemented at the national civil service level.

29. FICSA is quite willing to move quickly ahead with the implementation of the performance appraisal system and then study the results after two to three years (i.e., distribution rates and improved programme implementation) before moving towards a study of a possible performance pay system.

Contractual status of field staff

30. FICSA has long been concerned at the precarious contractual status of its constituents working in the field. Although the work of organizations in the field enjoys a high degree of visibility, the staff assigned to field offices, regional offices or projects are more often or not forgotten by their respective headquarters' organizations. With few exceptions, their conditions of service, both physical and monetary, are far inferior to those of their colleagues sitting in congenial surroundings overlooking First Avenue, the Colosseum, the Danube or Lac Léman, to name a few. Staff assigned to development projects and programmes may have served for 5, 10 or 20 years within the common system, yet few enjoy the same contractual arrangements which are offered to their headquarters' colleagues. In some instances, local General Service field staff hold short-term contracts, which they sign every three months, year in, year out, sometimes for decades. The absence of any security of tenure renders it well-nigh impossible for them to obtain access to credit, and while they are in the employment of the United Nations family of organizations, they are not able to maintain ties with national social security or pension schemes.

31. In some instances, the difference in treatment between local "field" staff, and international headquarters or field staff is dramatic. Although not strictly speaking considered part of the common system, the area staff of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) have conditions of service comparable to those of other General Service staff at Vienna. There have been, however, some serious divergences recently both in the implementation of salary adjustments and, of greater consequence, in the level and scope of termination benefits provided to area staff who, as a result of the transfer of UNRWA headquarters from Vienna to the Middle East, will be released from their employment.

32. In order to avoid the creation of a second or third class of staff member within the United Nations system, FICSA would request the Fifth Committee to seek greater harmonization of employment conditions, in particular contractual arrangements, which would ensure that field staff are not at a disadvantage vis-à-vis those serving at headquarters duty stations.

Personnel policy on HIV/AIDS

33. FICSA's concerns over the past year have not focused solely on issues of remuneration as the range of issues touched on in the present document bears witness. With regard to the topic of AIDS in the workplace, the Secretary-General of the United Nations declared on World AIDS Day 1992 that the United Nations had adopted for itself a compassionate, supportive and far-sighted personnel policy on AIDS ... a model for every organization the world over. He

further stated that he regarded his staff as a family. "We will support them in this crisis", he stated, "and do all we can to retain their skills and knowledge for as long as possible".

34. Despite the excellent intentions of the Secretary-General, the implementation of this compassionate and far-sighted policy has met with resistance in certain key areas, particularly at United Nations Headquarters.

35. FICSA would appeal to Member States to ensure that all organizations and specialized agencies of the common system respect the provisions of the United Nations HIV/AIDS personnel policy, endorsed by the General Assembly.

V. DECISIONS OF ADMINISTRATIVE TRIBUNALS

36. Over the past few years there have been several instances in which executive heads have refused to execute, wholly or in part, judgements of the administrative tribunals. This has led to further litigation by appellants for execution of judgement.

37. FICSA expresses grave concern about this situation and requests the General Assembly to reiterate the legal principle that tribunal judgements must be fully implemented.

38. The General Assembly, in its resolution 48/224, noted that, while under article 20 of the rules of procedure of the United Nations Administrative Tribunal and under article 17, paragraph 1, of the Rules of Court of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization the Chairman of the Pension Board might, on giving previous notice to the President of the Tribunal concerned, intervene in a case if it was considered that the judgement to be given by the Tribunal could affect the administration of the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Fund, there were no established mechanisms to ensure that the Pension Fund received timely notice of such cases and, furthermore, such opportunity was not provided to the International Civil Service Commission by either Tribunal. The Assembly then requested the executive heads of the organizations of the common system to consult with the Commission and the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board regarding the methodologies, procedures and rationale used in arriving at the Commission's decisions or recommendations [on conditions of service] that are the subject of appeals before the tribunals.

39. FICSA supports the fact that, under the rules of the tribunals, the Chairman of the Pension Board can intervene in a case if it is considered that the tribunal judgement could affect the administration of the Pension Fund because the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board is a tripartite working body that arrives at its decisions and recommendations through consensus among representatives of the governing bodies, executive heads and staff. FICSA, however, questions the appropriateness of according the right of intervention to ICSC because it is not a tripartite working body and does not make its decisions and recommendations by consensus. The Commission, in biannual sessions, makes its own recommendations and decisions be they right or wrong and is therefore wholly responsible for them.

40. At present, when a decision of the Commission contains technical flaws, the result is litigation through the tribunals. Examples of such litigation are Berlioz and others and Cussac, Moyse and Schmidt (judgements 1265 and 1266 of the Administrative Tribunal of the International Labour Organization) concerning the General Service salary scales recommended by the Commission as a result of the survey conducted at Geneva in 1990/1991. While the flaws in the methodology were indicated to the Commission when it was in session, the Commission chose to ignore the appraisal of its interlocutors and implement the survey results. Consequently, those suffering damage had no recourse other than litigation.

VI. PENSIONS

41. FICSA fully understands that as a tripartite negotiating body, the recommendations emanating from the United Nations Joint Staff Pension Board represent "packages" which will not necessarily be either fully satisfactory or totally unsatisfactory to all parties. Notwithstanding, the Federation was disappointed that the Pension Board at its forty-sixth session did not go further towards finding solutions to some of the problems facing staff pensions.

42. The outstanding issue of the pension rights of former participants in the former USSR, Ukrainian SSR and Byelorussian SSR is one instance where a speedy solution is imperative. FICSA believes that, while the Pension Board is no doubt correct in its conclusion that before meaningful progress can be achieved in resolving the problems ... the three Governments concerned must indicate clearly their readiness to respond in a meaningful manner to the claims of former participants, the Board is ignoring the human dimension of the problem. Help to the individuals concerned who are suffering severe hardship should be made available without delay through a wider and more systematic use of the Emergency Fund, which would represent a stop-gap rather than final solution.

43. With respect to the reduction of the 120 per cent cap to 110 per cent, FICSA cannot perceive the necessity for touching something which affects a small percentage of staff and of which the financial implications have been minimal.

44. Similarly, FICSA is disappointed that the Pension Board did not seek a solution to the very real problems of retirees in countries which have suffered high inflation and currency fluctuations. The critical financial situation of retirees in Argentina where retirees have lost more than 75 per cent of the purchasing power of their pensions since 1987 is an example of what can happen to retirees on the dollar track when high inflation coincides with an economic programme to maintain a constant value of the currency. Increases in salaries and pensionable remuneration during the past five years were not reflected in pensions. Despite a convincing presentation during the Pension Board session by a representative of AFICS-Buenos Aires, there was no consensus in the Pension Board to change the current pension adjustment system.

Appendix

FICSA PROPOSALS FOR IMPROVING PROTECTION OF FIELD STAFF

Presentation of the Federation of International Civil Servants' Associations to the Administrative Committee on Coordination at its second regular session of 1994 (New York, 21 and 22 September 1994)

I. BACKGROUND

1. During an ad hoc inter-agency meeting on security matters held in New York from 16 to 19 May 1994 an extensive discussion took place on the security measures needed to protect locally recruited United Nations staff in countries facing serious civil disturbances, civil war and other forms of unrest. During the meeting there was a general agreement that more could, and should, be done to avoid situations such as the April 1994 incidents involving killings of local staff in Rwanda.*

2. Since the security problems for locally-recruited staff in the field are the most contentious, with a wide range of opinions on how to deal with the matter among the administrations, this report will focus mainly on the proposals of FICSA in respect of security measures for locally recruited United Nations staff in field duty stations. The last section is dedicated to the common security problems of relevance to all categories of staff in the field.

II. SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS IN THE UNITED NATIONS FIELD SECURITY HANDBOOK

3. The United Nations Field Security Handbook, which was prepared and agreed upon during the ad hoc inter-agency meeting of June 1991 and endorsed by the Advisory Committee on Coordination at its session of October 1991, is a comprehensive document which details the procedures for all categories of staff and for most types of security risks occurring at field duty stations. FICSA recognizes that the Handbook is still the most reliable reference document although it does have some shortcomings:

(a) The Handbook makes a rather rigid distinction between United Nations staff, consultants, experts, volunteers and fellows employed or sponsored as

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* During the events taking place in Rwanda in early 1994 following the plane crash of the Rwandan President, very serious incidents affecting local staff were reported by various United Nations bodies. UNICEF and UNHCR staff members were brutally killed by rioters in front of the United Nations compound and in residences of United Nations staff. Local staff were admitted in the evacuation convoys but the trucks were stopped by uncontrolled army elements who forced them to leave the convoys. Their fate is unknown.

the case may be by the United Nations organizations (para. 13) and United Nations military and civilian personnel engaged in peace-keeping operations (para. 14). This distinction is well intended and FICSA strongly advocates that it be maintained in the interest of staff. However, since the drafting of the Handbook, the governing bodies have tended to ignore the distinction and there is increasing confusion between the political/military operations endorsed by the Security Council and other United Nations organizations involved with humanitarian operations or development assistance projects;

(b) The Handbook dedicates only one and a half pages out of a total of 79 to assistance to locally recruited staff members. This is not sufficient to treat the subject fairly and effectively.

III. CURRENT PROVISIONS OF THE HANDBOOK ON SECURITY ARRANGEMENTS FOR LOCALLY RECRUITED STAFF MEMBERS

4. While prior to 1991 there were very few instructions regarding locally recruited United Nations employees, be it expatriate local recruits or national staff recruited locally, the Handbook in its present version provides more specific instructions on how to deal with emergencies for these employees.

5. During the pre-emergency planning, the designated official has to maintain a list of locally recruited staff and their family members, establish a local warden system jointly with, or in addition to, the warden system for international staff and provide house identification with United Nations markings to staff members who request it. The Handbook also describes the continued running of the United Nations offices by local staff in the absence of international staff. As far as the emergency measures are concerned, the Handbook states that the provisions of phases 1 and 2 also apply to locally recruited staff.

6. The security arrangements for local staff during phases 3, 4 and 5 are as follows:

> "During phases 3, 4 and 5 - depending on the actual situation, and in consultation with the United Nations Security Coordinator, the designated official may exceptionally permit locally recruited staff to absent themselves from the duty station on special leave with pay or may relocate them to a safe area within the country and authorize payment of daily subsistence allowance for a period of up to 30 days. During phases 3 or 4, at the discretion of the designated official, they may be given three months' salary in advance and if necessary, a grant to cover transportation costs for themselves and their eligible family members.
>
> "All provisions within this Handbook which relate to relocation/evacuation from the host country for security reasons apply only in the most exceptional cases to locally-recruited staff members. The provisions for relocation/evacuation outside the country in which the duty station is located and relevant compensation for relocation/evacuation may be applied to locally recruited staff members in only the most exceptional cases in which their security is endangered, or their property is lost or damaged as

a direct consequence of the employment by the United Nations organizations. A decision in this regard can only be made by the Secretary-General, as recommended by the designated official."

7. From the above-quoted extract from the Handbook one can see that while there is some flexibility for relocation of local staff to a safe area within the country, the Handbook is more intransigent when it comes to relocation and evacuation to other countries, where the phrase "most exceptional cases" has been used twice. The decision-making process ("can only be made by the Secretary-General") is also highly centralized and therefore complicated.

IV. FICSA PROPOSALS RELATED TO SECURITY FOR LOCALLY RECRUITED STAFF

8. All locally recruited staff and their dependants should have United Nations identification documents which specify their employment status, the names of their eligible family members and the courtesies and protection to be offered to them as to any other United Nations officer by the Member States. There are no legal impediments to issuing these documents since locally recruited staff are considered international civil servants as defined in the United Nations Charter and are therefore subject to the same rules regarding independence of the international civil service (art. 100).

9. When phase 1 is declared, the designated official should verify that all staff and dependants have the proper identification documents.

10. The warden system in every field duty station should function as a uniform early-warning system as far as reporting and information flow is concerned. The current arrangements which recognize a separate warden system for international staff and for local staff may be correct in some duty stations from the point of view of the residence locations but are not appropriate for reliable reporting on events.

11. The decision to relocate or evacuate local staff to a country abroad should be the responsibility of the designated official, who will act after consultation with other senior United Nations Organization officials. The local United Nations or United Nations Organization heads are usually the best judges of the situation. Under the current arrangements, the decision to declare the third, fourth or fifth phase is made by the Secretary-General upon the recommendation of the designated official. The Secretary-General bases his decision on the report on the situation by the United Nations Security Coordinator, whose office is in charge of the daily monitoring of the security situation from the United Nations Headquarters and who usually relies on the reports provided by the designated official. The operational details are worked out by the designated official in cooperation with the Security Coordinator if necessary. There are no valid reasons to involve the Secretary-General with the operational details of ensuring the security of all staff under phases 3, 4 or 5. Once such a phase is indeed declared by the Secretary-General, it is up to the designated official, in consultation with the other Organization representatives, to decide which staff will be evacuated or relocated and who will eventually remain on duty as essential/skeleton staff of his/her

organization. If during Phases 3, 4 or 5 the designated official considers it crucial in his best judgement to evacuate part of, or the entire local staff and dependants, he should take the appropriate measures and inform the Security Coordinator accordingly.

12. All the organizations employing international or local staff at the duty station with fixed-term contracts should maintain a roster providing all the biographical and educational details and details regarding professional qualifications and experience. Once phase 1 is in effect the organizations concerned should automatically update this roster and share it with all United Nations system organizations and with other bilateral, multilateral agencies and non-governmental organizations, particularly humanitarian or relief agencies. Refusal to evacuate local staff has in the past often been justified on the basis that employment by the employing agency and redeployment to other employers is impossible. FICSA believes that, provided there is a genuine will to work together on an inter-agency basis and also on the assumption that there are no bureaucratic red tape practices involved from the personnel departments within the United Nations and beyond, it is possible to integrate all staff on evacuation status, both expatriate and local staff, into new assignments or to redeploy them within a reasonable amount of time. The most obvious possibility of redeployment of local staff are the relief organizations such as UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, the Red Cross, etc.

13. All United Nations system organizations should undertake steps to include locally recruited staff under their provisions for compensation for loss of personal effects or coverage under the malicious acts insurance policy. There may be justification for proposing a different type of coverage since the personal effects may be of a different nature for expatriate and local staff.

V. FICSA PROPOSALS TO IMPROVE SECURITY MEASURES FOR ALL CATEGORIES OF STAFF

14. As already mentioned in paragraph 3 (a) above, the United Nations Field Security Handbook rightly differentiates between United Nations personnel employed at or on mission at the duty station on the one hand and military or civilian personnel assigned to United Nations peace-keeping operations who, in accordance with paragraph 14 of the Handbook, are excluded from the provisions of the Handbook. FICSA is aware of a number of complaints from civilian staff members regarding totally inappropriate or complete lack of security briefing for these staff members when they take up their assignments. Sometimes there are also serious communication gaps or conflicting instructions by civilian officers and military commanders, generally caused by inappropriate briefings on both sides. Even worse are the situations where staff is seconded from the United Nations Secretariat or from another United Nations organization to a peace-keeping operation without any proper administrative briefing. It is therefore essential that the briefing of civilian staff assigned or seconded to these peace-keeping operations be streamlined by all administrations.

15. FICSA is very concerned about the practice prevailing in some relief organizations operating in high-risk security countries (Angola and Somalia) of recruiting local armed guards to protect relief supplies and staff members. The

Office of Legal Affairs has rightly advised that such use of armed guards is contrary to United Nations policy but FICSA believes that a simple condemnation of this dubious recruitment practice is not enough. FICSA proposes to return to the United Nations policy in place in the early 1980s when staff members were not allowed to work in areas where armed guards were required to ensure safety of staff. For instance, when the host Government insisted on providing army escorts to visiting staff on mission or on assignment because of rebel activities or other possible risks, the United Nations policy in place in those days prevented any staff movements in those zones. This policy, which was very much inspired by the development mandate of the United Nations system in developing countries as opposed to the current emphasis on the United Nations as a peace broker, was built on the premise that development cannot take place in a permanently insecure environment. FICSA requests that staff assigned to programmes or specialized agencies operating under mandates not endorsed by the Security Council should not be asked to work in zones where armed guards are required to ensure their protection.

16. More needs to be done at the legal and political level of the General Assembly to ensure that host Governments do not avoid their responsibilities to guarantee basic security conditions for United Nations personnel working in their countries. In this regard, FICSA is supporting the initiative of the General Assembly to conclude a convention on the safety of United Nations personnel assigned to operations endorsed by the Security Council. The application of the convention should however be extended to all United Nations system staff, irrespective of the organization's mandate or Security Council involvement.

17. The office of the Security Coordinator should be strengthened and given more funding and staff to carry out its functions effectively. The deteriorating security situation and the expansion of United Nations activities in high-risk areas amply justify this proposal. The office should continue to operate on an inter-agency cooperative cost-sharing basis and within the United Nations it should be made a homogenous core programme.

18. Eligible dependants of staff members who are on mission outside the duty station during the occurrence of security incidents should receive the same protection as other staff members. This also applies to staff members who have recently been separated but decided to stay behind for personal reasons, such as finishing the school year of the children at the duty station.

19. The existing coverage of the malicious acts insurance policy should be extended from service-incurred to a full 24-hour coverage for all staff.

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PROGRAMME BUDGET FOR THE BIENNIUM 1994-1995

PATTERN OF CONFERENCES

Comprehensive study on conference services

Report of the Secretary-General

I. INTRODUCTION

1. In paragraph 42 of its resolution 48/228 of 23 December 1993, the General Assembly requested the Secretary-General "to submit to the General Assembly at its forty-ninth session a comprehensive study on the organization, management and human resources requirements for the provision of adequate conference services as a basis for the consideration of his proposals for the regular budget for the biennium 1996-1997". The study requested has been undertaken with the assistance of an independent consultant engaged by the Department of Administration and Management and the full involvement of the Office of Conference and Support Services. Because of time and resource constraints, the study concentrated on conference services at Headquarters, although the findings and recommendations are considered generally applicable to United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna as well.

2. The study found that the demand for conference services has increased significantly since 1991 and exceeds the capacity of Conference Services at the present level of staff and other resources. The study identified certain measures that could improve the productivity and efficiency of the management of conference-servicing resources and stressed the need for improved communications between Conference Services and those submitting materials to be processed or using the services provided by Conference Services. Many of the recommendations of the study are now being acted upon, and the findings and recommendations of

the study will also be taken into account in the preparation of the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997.

A. Definitions

3. The present study has been based upon a definition of conference services as those services required for the conduct of conferences and meetings and for the issuance of documents relating to such meetings. In accordance with the medium-term plan for 1992-1997, 1/ the general aims of Conference Services as an organizational unit can be described as follows:

> "To provide to the organs of the United Nations, other intergovernmental bodies and their respective subsidiary bodies the services required for the efficient and effective conduct of their meetings and conferences in a manner that makes optimum and most cost-effective use of the conference-servicing resources and facilities available worldwide;
>
> "To develop and plan, for submission to the Committee on Conferences, a proposed calendar of meetings for the Organization that adheres to the resolutions [of intergovernmental bodies] and to the rules and principles of conference planning and that is designed so as to make the most cost-effective use, world wide, of conference-servicing resources, centres and facilities;
>
> "To ensure the quality, timely issuance, availability and wide dissemination of documents and publications produced by the Organization to Member States and other users in a variety of readily accessible forms; and
>
> "To ensure adherence to the procedures established for the control and limitation of documentation in material submitted for processing."

Conference services comprise planning, meetings servicing, interpretation, verbatim reporting, précis-writing, documents control, editing, reference and terminology, translation (including contractual translation), text-processing, copy preparation and proofreading, typographical design, desktop publishing, reproduction and distribution.

4. Conference services are placed at the disposal of intergovernmental and expert bodies to assist them to carry out their work and achieve their objectives. Therefore, conference services might be considered adequate if they permit Member States to meet in accordance with the approved calendar and to conduct deliberations on the matters they wish to consider. By this definition, the adequacy of conference services cannot and should not be measured by the outcome of the deliberations themselves; while inadequate conference services may prevent successful deliberations, adequate conference services, however defined, cannot ensure successful deliberations.

5. The study focuses attention on the following:

(a) Conference-servicing resources are limited and must be used in a cost-effective manner. There is a limit not only to the number of staff that can be

employed within the established budgetary allocations for conference-servicing but also to the capacity of this staff to meet the ever-increasing demand for services. There are also limits to the extent to which this capacity can be enhanced by the application of office automation technology, equipment and other technical resources;

(b) Services must be timely to be of value. Documents must be issued sufficiently in advance of the meeting at which the agenda item to which they relate will be considered to allow representatives of Member States to study them. All necessary services must be available at the scheduled starting time of a meeting;

(c) Services must be of the highest quality. To be of value to Member States and help intergovernmental bodies to achieve their objectives, conference services must be of the highest quality. The effective conduct of meetings requires the issuance of well-prepared documents in a timely fashion and the provision of high-quality interpretation and other services.

Therefore the task of providing adequate conference services requires maintaining an optimal balance among quality, timeliness and efficiency. High quality, timeliness and efficiency are all essential components of adequate conference-servicing. In the short term, because of resource constraints, limits to capacity, inadequate technical support or other factors, the high priority given to one component, such as timeliness, may adversely affect the other components. Nevertheless, the longer-term objective continues to be improvement in all three components.

B. Criteria

6. New, more appropriate criteria for measuring conference-servicing performance are being developed as a result of the study. These are considered below (see sect. III).

II. ORGANIZATION OF CONFERENCE SERVICES

A. Objectives

7. The organization of conference services must:

(a) Facilitate the efficient use of limited resources to provide high-quality services in a timely and effective manner to meet the requirements of United Nations conferences and meetings world wide;

(b) Permit clear assignment of responsibility and appropriate delegation of authority to programme managers, who will be held accountable for the achievement of set objectives within the resources provided;

(c) Establish clear lines of communication both internally and with other departments and offices;

(d) Encourage the exercise of initiative and flexibility necessary to respond to rapidly changing requirements for services;

(e) Encourage cooperation and coordination not only among conference-servicing units world wide but between Conference Services and other organizational units of the Secretariat as well as with intergovernmental bodies and representatives of Member States.

B. Present organizational structure

8. The organizational structure of Conference Services was revised in mid-1994 as proposed in the report of the Secretary-General on the reorganization of the Department of Administration and Management (A/C.5/48/72) and accepted by the General Assembly in its decision 48/491 of 14 July 1994. As described therein, the former Office of Conference Services and Office of General Services were combined to form the Office of Conference and Support Services, managed by an Assistant Secretary-General. The functional responsibilities of Conference Services involve essential functions for facilitating communication among Member States, and should contribute to the successful functioning of the United Nations and the perception of it as an efficient Organization. In his managerial responsibilities regarding Conference Services, the Assistant Secretary-General for Conference and Support Services is assisted by a Deputy at the Director level, responsible for supervising the services concerned on a day-to-day basis, directing the development of conference-servicing policies in the Organization and establishing procedures and practices for the provision of conference services at all locations. The organizational structure is slightly different at the United Nations Offices at Geneva and Vienna. In Geneva, the Conference Services Division, comprising the Conference Service, the Languages Service, the Interpretation Service, the Publishing Service and the Library, is separate from the Division of Administration; the Director of Conference Services reports directly to the Director-General, United Nations Office at Geneva. In the proposed organization of a unified conference service at Vienna, conference services and administrative services are combined in a single Division of Administrative and Common Services (A/C.5/49/24). The organization of Conference Services at Headquarters is shown in annex 1 to the present report.

9. In all cases, however, Conference Services is organized on hierarchical and functional lines, with separate organizational units for each type of conference service. At Headquarters, these units are grouped in two main divisions: the Translation and Editorial Division and the Interpretation, Meetings and Documentation Division. Within the Office of the Director, senior staff supervise units for Central Planning and Coordination, Documents Control and the Technological Innovations Programme.

C. Analysis of organizational structure

10. The study analysed the internal organization of Conference Services and relations between Conference Services and other units of the Secretariat. The organization of Conference Services by function, with a separate unit

established to deal with each aspect of conference-servicing, brings the benefits of specialization and clear delineations of responsibility, authority and accountability. Such an organization facilitates the processing of documents and the servicing of meetings, avoiding overlapping of function or duplication of effort. Lines of communication are clear and direct, and there is appropriate delegation of authority to respond flexibly to changing requirements. Internal communications are good.

11. However, specialization and emphasis upon internal processing activities may detract attention from communication between units in Conference Services, with other units in the Secretariat and with users of conference services. The comprehensive review found a need for greater awareness on the part of Conference Services of the needs and concerns of the users of its services and those who supply materials for processing by Conference Services. There also appeared to be insufficient understanding by others, in some cases, of the requirements and capacities of Conference Services.

D. Proposals for improvement

12. As a result of the study, there is now greater recognition of the importance of strengthening communications between Conference Services and the rest of the Secretariat, as well as with representatives of Member States, in order to exchange information and take coordinated action to achieve common goals. Steps are therefore now being taken to establish networks linking the staff of Conference Services with other units of the Secretariat that either submit materials to Conference Services for processing or use the products of Conference Services and with Permanent Missions in respect of the servicing of intergovernmental bodies or expert groups.

13. These networks are intended to improve a variety of working relations between Conference Services and others. They would include departments that provide the manuscripts that Conference Services processes and secretariats of intergovernmental bodies, which are concerned with planning the work of those bodies and ensuring that the necessary documents and meetings services are provided in a timely and effective manner.

14. Consideration is being given to assigning to Conference Services staff special responsibility for services for specific intergovernmental bodies and expert groups and their related author departments. Rather than duplicating the work of committee secretaries and document coordinators in substantive departments, such officers would complement their work, relying on them to assess the requirements of the bodies and propose schedules for the submission and issuance of documents. This function would be coordinated by the Office of the Director.

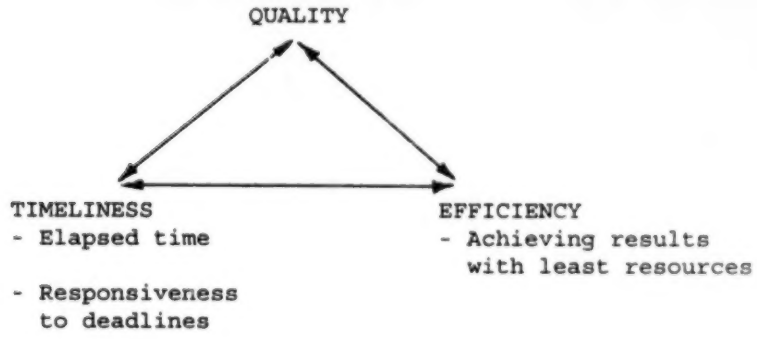
15. Actions to strengthen the central planning and coordinating capacities of the Office of the Director of Conference Services are under review, including the establishment of a group to coordinate the work of all conference centres in preparing for and servicing global conferences. In addition, a structure is being introduced to establish and develop continuous performance improvement functions.

III. MANAGEMENT OF CONFERENCE SERVICES

A. Objective

16. The objective in managing conference services is to use the relatively limited resources available so as to provide the services required with an optimal balance among quality, timeliness and efficiency. The challenge on a day-to-day basis is to make the right choices necessary for that balance. As indicated above, this implies being aware of the needs and priorities for each product and service provided. The long-term challenge is to improve quality, timeliness and efficiency through better systems, procedures and management.

Performance management



B. Analysis of present arrangements

1. Global management of conference-servicing resources

17. Although conference services at Geneva and Vienna are formally under the authority of the Directors-General of those Offices, the Assistant Secretary-General for Conference and Support Services and his deputy, the Director of Conference Services at Headquarters, have overall responsibility for the management of conference-servicing resources provided in section 25 E of the 1994-1995 programme budget: Conference services, New York, Geneva and Vienna. This responsibility involves the appointment and promotion of conference-servicing staff and coordination of conference-servicing activities world wide to ensure that optimum use is made of the available resources. The appointment and promotion of language staff at Headquarters, Geneva and Vienna is based upon recommendations made by the Director of Conference Services to the Assistant Secretary-General for Conference and Support Services. On behalf of the Director, the directors of divisions and chiefs of services at Headquarters maintain regular, close contact with their counterparts at Geneva, Vienna and other conference centres, coordinating plans and redeploying staff or work to make the best use of available capacities. Within the Office of the Director, the Coordinator of the Technological Innovations Programme at Headquarters maintains close contacts with his counterpart at Geneva to ensure compatibility of applications of computer technology and a consistent development strategy.

18. One of the main instruments for the global coordination of conference services is the calendar of United Nations conferences and meetings, prepared under the direction of the Chief, Planning and Meetings Servicing Section, who also serves as Secretary to the Committee on Conferences. The calendar is reviewed by the Committee on Conferences and submitted to the General Assembly for approval. A computer database for United Nations conferences and meetings is being established to facilitate coordination among conference centres and the preparation and implementation of the biennial calendar of conferences and meetings.

2. Management and coordination at Headquarters

19. At Headquarters, the work of the specialized functional units that provide conference services is coordinated through weekly meetings convened by the Directors of Division and by the Chief of Documents Control to plan the processing of documents and the servicing of meetings for the coming weeks. These meetings bring together the staff concerned from various organizational units to ensure that common priorities are agreed upon and appropriate resources are allocated for the timely completion of work.

3. Production line for processing documents

20. To cope efficiently with the high volume of documentation and the short deadlines for issuance, conference-servicing units form a production line, with priorities for processing established by Documents Control, in consultation with the secretariats of intergovernmental bodies and with processing units. Plans are being developed to strengthen the capacity of Documents Control to plan and monitor document production and to enforce rules on documentation.

21. In each processing unit, in order to process the manuscripts as quickly as possible, documents are often divided up among several staff members and reassembled at the stage of preparing camera-ready pages for reproduction. While production lines permit the efficient and rapid processing of documents, they require staff to work on a succession of portions of various documents, making it difficult for them to identify with the production of final documents. A single translator or text-processing operator is rarely responsible for the preparation of an entire document, which is often reviewed only at the stage of assembling camera-ready pages for reproduction. Often there is no opportunity for overall review of a lengthy document that has been translated by several self-revising translators.

4. Cooperation with other organizational units

22. Another goal of organizational arrangements is to encourage close cooperation not only among units of Conference Services but among all departments and offices concerned with the work of intergovernmental bodies and expert groups. Such cooperation is essential between the two parts of the Office of Conference and Support Services, but it is also very important in the case of other departments and offices. Although there are no formal

organizational arrangements for cooperation of this kind, there are daily contacts between Documents Control and the Planning and Meetings Services Section in Conference Services and substantive secretariats and author departments concerning the scheduling of documents processing and meetings of intergovernmental bodies. During the fall session of the General Assembly, there are also weekly coordination meetings of the staff of Conference Services and the General Assembly Secretariat Services Branch with the secretaries of the Main Committees to ensure the most effective and efficient use of available resources to meet the needs of the work of the Assembly. These weekly meetings, begun during the forty-eighth session, have proven to be useful.

5. Inadequacy of performance indicators

23. A programme of continuous improvement requires performance measurements that indicate the degree to which Conference Services is using resources efficiently and effectively to deliver, in a timely manner, high-quality services that meet the requirements of those for whom the services are being provided. The study found that workload statistics currently compiled are not very useful as performance indicators. They are not always consistent with each other, they are sometimes difficult to interpret, and they do not cover all the aspects of conference-servicing in which continuous improvements are sought. Output statistics for documentation, for example, record work done rather than final output; while this is useful for internal management purposes, it does not provide a clear picture of the number of pages of final documentation produced.

6. Failure of current workload statistics to measure demand

24. One of the most significant problems encountered is that current workload statistics cover only work completed, not incoming workload or the total demand for services. Documentation statistics report the volume of work done by various services in a given period, but not the volume of documentation submitted for processing. Consequently, backlogs of unprocessed documents are not reflected in the statistics for the period in which they should have been produced. Similarly, the numbers of meetings serviced, with or without interpretation, are reported, but not the total numbers of meetings requested. As a result, levels of demand for conference services are probably underestimated in current Conference Services statistics. Since there have been no measures of aggregate demand for services, it has been difficult to assess the extent to which the demands for services has exceeded the capacity of Conference Services to supply them.

7. Need to encourage more systematic teamwork

25. The ability of Conference Services to meet the demands for its services depends upon teamwork within the Secretariat and among its own work units. Teamwork is encouraged, and the study found that there is usually effective teamwork among the various units. However, as mentioned above, there has been no systematic measurement or analysis of team performance. The need for managers and staff to focus on immediate production may mean that opportunities

to improve teamwork are missed. In such cases, problems in the many working relations between units of Conference Services can remain hidden, masking extra work that may be required because one work unit did not provide its work product to the next unit in the best possible form.

8. Need for closer cooperation with departments and offices

26. In the current study of conference services, the need for close cooperation by Conference Services with the departments and offices concerned from the initial stages of preparation of a document has been emphasized as essential to the timely issuance of documents. Accurate advance information concerning the number, the complexity and the length of documents to be submitted to an intergovernmental body and the dates on which such documents will be submitted for processing is required by Conference Services. Unfortunately, this information is often not available. The study found that, although there may be reasonable coordination among document focal point managers in substantive departments, coordinating units (such as the Security Council Affairs Division, the General Assembly Secretariat Services Branch and the Division for Policy Coordination and Economic and Social Council Affairs) and Documents Control in Conference Services, such coordination is much too late for the teamwork and goal conformance needed throughout the United Nations to begin. It must start, at a minimum, with the authors of documents, and must be supported by the managers of author departments. Such coordination is particularly important in the case of bodies, such as the Security Council, that have an inherently unpredictable schedule of meetings and volume of documentation.

9. Need for better information on the costs of services

27. Effective management of conference-servicing resources requires an accurate knowledge of their costs. Better cost information on meetings and documentation is needed to give a more complete picture of the total costs involved and to improve budgeting for conference services. Better full-cost information is needed for different modes of work and for different workflows. Furthermore the effects on costs of the addition of work to or removal of work from Conference Services processing have not been thoroughly analysed. The study recommended that factors that cause different amounts of work to be done should be examined, and the resulting cost and time differences calculated, to assist in the identification of opportunities to reduce costs by eliminating rework and removing work from the conference-servicing processes. Under the budgetary procedure adopted by the General Assembly in resolution 41/213, provision is made in the programme budget for meetings programmed at the time of the preparation of the programme budget and also for meetings that would be authorized subsequently, on the assumption that the number and distribution of meetings would be consistent with the pattern of previous years. To the extent that, in a given biennium, the volume of meetings and documentation is higher than the pattern of previous years, this makes it difficult to satisfy the demands within the approved level of resources. This has been the case over the past five years. As a result of sustained increases in the number of meetings and the volume of documentation, capacity levels established on the basis of earlier experience have been consistently below actual requirements. Decisions

to add meetings to the approved calendar "within existing resources" have imposed burdens that conference Services has not been able to deal with adequately.

C. Proposals for improvement

1. New performance indicators

28. A series of workshops in Conference Services has resulted in the identification of 17 potential performance indicators that might be used in reporting to Member States in order to give a more comprehensive assessment of the work done in conference-servicing. These include indicators of timeliness, quality and efficiency, some of which will be based on surveys of delegations of Member States and substantive departments in the Secretariat. The proposed performance indicators also include seven indicators of demand, workload and capacity utilization. Following a period of testing in 1995 in New York and Geneva, during which indicators will be further refined, they will be applied during the 1996-1997 biennium.

29. The comprehensive study also highlighted the need to measure performance in ways that would reveal the nature of apparent productivity changes and internal performance differences among units with similar functions. For its internal reporting, Conference Services has identified specific management uses of performance data, such as improving resource allocation decisions, improving teamwork, or reducing rework, and is developing measurements relating to these issues.

2. Introduction of demand forecasting

Documentation

30. Any useful forecasting and advance scheduling of documentation workload requires realistic deadlines for authors, an earnest effort by author departments to meet deadlines, much earlier notice of changes in submission dates, and accuracy and timeliness in both forecasts and changes in forecasts. One approach to providing better advance information is for authors and their managers to project dates of key milestones before submission (completion of field research, receipt of responses from Member States, policy clearance of draft). Conference Services would receive reports on when those milestones are achieved or missed, and the impact of missing milestones on final submission dates. Reporting could be done electronically using project management software.

31. On the basis of an analysis of the actual patterns of incoming manuscripts and the time required for processing, a pilot project is being carried out to apply methods for project planning to establish realistic milestones for preparing documents before submission.

Meetings

32. In view of the many, varied and frequently changing requirements of intergovernmental bodies and expert groups, scheduling is not a one-time activity limited to the preparation of the biennial calendar of conferences and meetings; it is one of the most important ongoing functions of the staff of the Meetings Planning Unit of Conference Services, who work closely with the secretariats of intergovernmental bodies, chairmen of regional groups and others concerned with meetings-servicing and, on occasion with presiding officers, continuously adjusting meeting schedules and room assignments to ensure that as many bodies as possible can be suitably accommodated. Scheduling is particularly difficult in the case of meetings of regional groups. Although such meetings are to be serviced within existing resources, they are increasingly important for the work of the General Assembly. A computer database of calendars and meetings is being established, covering Geneva and Vienna as well as New York, and an analysis is being made of the patterns of actual demand for meetings services in order to identify measures that could reduce the level of uncertainty in planning and permit the most efficient use of limited resources.

3. Teamwork and closer cooperation with substantive secretariats and author departments

33. Improving teamwork is recognized as a continuous function, requiring actions as well as measurements, and steps have been initiated to improve teamwork at all levels: within the Office of Conference and Support Services, within the Department of Administration and Management, and within the Secretariat as a whole. Within Conference Services a network of staff in the various processing units has been established to improve internal working relations.

4. Continuous improvement

34. The study found that present workload standards tended to establish static performance goals and recommended that the most effective way to encourage improvement of services would be to use a system of "benchmarking", under which the services would make systematic comparisons and help each other to identify the best practices, which they could all adopt. Since benchmarking units compare processes and practices as well as performances, there could be good opportunities for even the highest performing unit to improve. To implement this recommendation, a series of workshops has been held within Conference Services and a system of benchmarking has been developed for use in the management of conference services.

35. A conference services improvement network has been established, and each organizational unit has begun to develop its own working procedures and modalities for the introduction of continuous improvement within the unit, to establish its own performance indicators, or "benchmarks", to determine what form improvements should take and to identify areas where improvements in working relationships between units would contribute to overall improvement.

Within each unit, a staff member has been designated to serve as a focal point for the network. These staff members will meet on a regular basis in meetings chaired by the Director of Conference Services for an exchange of views on actions taken in each unit to improve performance.

5. Measuring conference-servicing costs

36. Ways and means of recording and analysing the costs of conference-servicing are under consideration. These would cover the planning and preparation for conferences and meetings as well as the actual servicing of such meetings (including preparing and issuing the necessary documents).

6. Revised methods of workflow management

37. With improved forecasting, as described in paragraphs 30 to 32 above, it should be possible to revise the present methods of workflow management. The feasibility of moving to a "short-cycle" throughput for certain categories of pre-session documents is being examined. Special measures for dealing with documents, often completely unforeseen, that require immediate processing are also being explored. The database of the Documents Recording, Information and Tracking System (DRITS) will be used to produce more detailed performance reports for managers.

7. Application of new technologies to conference-servicing

38. The application of technological innovations in conference-servicing is continuing along the lines described in the medium-term plan for 1992-1997, bringing gains in the quality and timeliness of services and reducing costs. All text-processing units have completed their conversion to the use of networked computer workstations and text-processing software; desktop publishing capabilities have been established for English, French, Russian and Spanish languages in the Copy Preparation and Proofreading Section and will be developed in Arabic and Chinese; verbatim records and other official records are now prepared by verbatim reporters and official records editors on screen, using computer workstations and text-processing software; the processing of documents by Conference Services and the scheduling of interpreter assignments at Headquarters are done using computer databases and information systems; a computer database of terminology in all official languages of the United Nations is fully operational; all parliamentary documents produced in New York or Geneva are now being stored in electronic form on optical disk, to which access is being provided to Permanent Missions at New York and Geneva.

39. The comprehensive study supports the recommendations of two previously established internal Conference Services working groups dealing respectively with machine-assisted translation and with electronic documentation. Conference Services is now in the process of acquiring 120 computer workstations as the first step in providing all translators with automated equipment. Translators' workstations would be linked with those of text-processing units, editorial services and the Documentation, Reference and Terminology Section as well as

with other databases within and outside the United Nations system. The design of parliamentary documents is being revised to take account of both the requirements and the capabilities of text-processing software, and text-processing units are now preparing documents (such as the proposed programme budget) that previously required external typesetting. Upgraded desktop publishing equipment and software is being provided to the Copy Preparation and Proofreading Section, together with appropriate training, so that full desktop publishing capacities in all languages but Chinese (for which the necessary software is not yet available) will be established in the 1996-1997 biennium. The capacity of the optical disk system is being expanded to provide access to all Permanent Missions in New York and Geneva and to more Secretariat staff; further enhancement of the system, including its establishment at Vienna, will be needed in 1996-1997. In the reproduction and distribution areas, increased use is being made of bar-code technology for tracking work or measuring performance. Preliminary studies are now being made of the feasibility and desirability of procuring for the reproduction plant equipment that can produce plates from digital information, thus permitting the processing of documents from submission to reproduction in electronic form. Detailed proposals for the application of technological innovations to improve conference-servicing will be made in the proposed programme budget for 1996-1997.

IV. HUMAN RESOURCES REQUIREMENTS

A. Objective

40. In managing the staff of Conference Services, the objective is to ensure the availability of staff with the necessary skills and training to provide the required services to intergovernmental bodies and to make optimum use of such staff.

B. Present situation

1. Labour-intensive conference-servicing

41. Conference-servicing is very labour-intensive. Established posts for Conference Services account for about 20 per cent of the total number of established Secretariat posts financed from the regular budget for 1994-1995 (about 25 per cent of the posts in the Professional category and 18 per cent of the posts in the General Service category) and more than half of the established posts under part VIII, Common support services. The ratio of Professional category to General Service posts is higher than for the Secretariat as a whole (.88 as opposed to .63), reflecting the concentration of functions that require specialized Professional qualifications. Language posts in the Professional category (the great majority of posts in Conference Services) are filled on the basis of international competitive examinations, with successful candidates appointed for an initial probationary period of two years.

2. Capacity of established staffing levels

42. In recent years, the demand for services has increased, while the established staffing levels have decreased. The established practice has been to set staffing for conference services at levels with a capacity below expected levels of demand for conference-servicing, on the understanding that this capacity will be augmented as necessary by recruitment of staff for temporary assignments of short duration and by the contracting of work to external providers of languages services. Despite a variety of measures to increase productivity, particularly through increased self-revision by translators, it has become necessary to resort increasingly to staff recruited against temporary assistance funds and to external contractual services. Nevertheless, the number of non-calendar meetings for which services could not be provided has increased (see para. 44 (b)) and work had to be deferred on documents such as summary and verbatim records of meetings.

3. Levels and mix of conference-services staff

43. On the basis of a review of experience, estimates have been made of the demand for conference services since 1991 and of the extent to which there was the capacity to meet that demand. There has been a growing gap between the level of conference services demanded and the level of services the Secretariat was able to provide, despite measures by the Secretariat to improve planning and increase productivity. The practice has been to calculate conference-services requirements for each new biennium on the basis of average output figure for the previous five years. In a period of rising demand, this has led to a consistent underestimation of real demand and resource requirements.

44. In the case of meetings-servicing, analysis of data for meetings at Headquarters during the three-year period from July 1991 to July 1994 indicated the following:

(a) The total demand for meetings (the sum of meetings scheduled, reassignments, additions and meetings declined) has increased;

(b) The number of meetings for which services could not be provided rose from 57 in 1990 to 157 in 1993;

(c) The difference between the number of meetings scheduled and actual demand (as defined above) has decreased, suggesting that planning has improved on the part of both the Secretariat and intergovernmental bodies;

(d) The difference between the actual demand and the number of meetings serviced has increased, suggesting that demand increasingly exceeds capacity, even though capacity utilization has improved.

45. The reasons for these trends are still being analysed, but a preliminary conclusion is that three factors have contributed to greater utilization of meetings-servicing capacity:

(a) Improved organization of their programmes of work has enabled intergovernmental bodies to make more realistic initial estimates of their requirements;

(b) The Secretariat has also improved the reliability of its estimates of actual requirements (as indicated by a decrease in the difference between the number of meetings scheduled and the number of meetings actually serviced);

(c) There has been greater success in redeployment to other meetings of resources released by the cancellation of planned meetings (reflected in an increase in the utilization of capacity in the interpretation services from an average of about 77 per cent in 1991 to 88 per cent in 1993 and 93 per cent in the first half of 1994).

However, an offsetting factor, making it more difficult to provide all services requested, has been an increase in the number of unforeseen or ad hoc requests for meetings not included in the calendar. In addition, the level of activity of bodies such as the Security Council, the Fifth Committee and the Advisory Committee on Administrative and Budgetary Questions has increased and many intergovernmental bodies have required parallel meetings not originally foreseen.

46. In the case of documentation, analysis of the data so far has indicated that:

(a) There has been an overall increase in the demand for documentation services;

(b) This demand has exceeded the capacity of established staffing levels, despite increases in productivity;

(c) Meeting this increased demand has required a greater reliance upon temporary assistance and contractual services.

47. The increased demand for documentation has been largely the consequence of an increase in documentation requirements of the Security Council and its subsidiary bodies, especially since 1992. In contractual translation, about two thirds of the work now consists of parliamentary documentation and one third publication, reversing the proportions of several years ago. The increasing use made of limited contractual translation resources for parliamentary documents was possible because, for a variety of reasons, the number of publications prepared by substantive departments had declined. However, this is likely to be a temporary situation that will not continue into the 1996-1997 biennium.

C. Proposals for improvement

1. Revision of levels and mix of conference-services staffing

48. Better measurements of real demand for conference services are being developed and will be analysed. New Performance indicators and cost measurement systems are also expected to provide better management tools and improve the

quality of budgetary analysis, facilitating the calculation of the overall level of staffing required and the most cost-effective combination of established and temporary staff and contractual services. In any calculation of the capacity of the Secretariat to meet the demand for conference services, several factors must be considered: the productivity rates of the services concerned, established staffing levels, available temporary assistance resources and the extent to which contractual services can be used to meet some requirements. The most appropriate combination of these depends on (a) what measures can be taken to improve the productivity and thus increase the output capacity of the services at present staffing levels; and (b) what is considered the most efficient mix of established posts, temporary assistance and contractual services in each function and language unit.

49. At the present stage, no major increases in capacity can be expected simply from measures to increase productivity. For example, the use of office automation equipment to assist translators will enhance the quality of their work but will not bring immediate gains in productivity. It is therefore necessary to estimate overall staffing requirements on the basis of experience since 1990 and projections of demand for services in 1996-1997, rather than only on previous output levels. This approach will be followed in preparing proposals for the programme budget for 1996-1997.

2. Increased training of staff

50. In addition to the problems of deciding upon the number of conference-servicing staff required and the most appropriate combination of established posts, temporary assistance and contractual services, it is essential that conference-servicing staff be given the training needed to work efficiently and effectively, providing the highest level of service to intergovernmental bodies and expert groups and making the most effective use of new technologies and techniques in the performance of their functions. The areas in which training needs have been identified include language training in additional passive languages to lessen dependence on temporary assistance over time and, in certain cases, in the actual language of work to ensure that the language used by those United Nations interpreters and translators in meetings and documents reflects terms and expressions currently used by the Member States concerned. In the area of computer and related new technology training, the introduction of on-screen translation will require translators to learn basic and advanced computer skills; copy preparers need to be trained in desktop publishing techniques to reduce reliance on external typesetting, and staff in the internal printing facility need to keep abreast of developments and trends in the printing industry to enhance the production of as many publications in house as possible. While some of these training requirements may be met in house, others will require funding for external studies. Conference Services has also begun to explore the possible redeployment of work among the various functional groups and will keep this possibility in mind as part of its continuing efforts to utilize existing resources to the maximum extent possible. Detailed recommendations on staff training will be included in the programme budget proposals for 1996-1997.

V. PHYSICAL FACILITIES

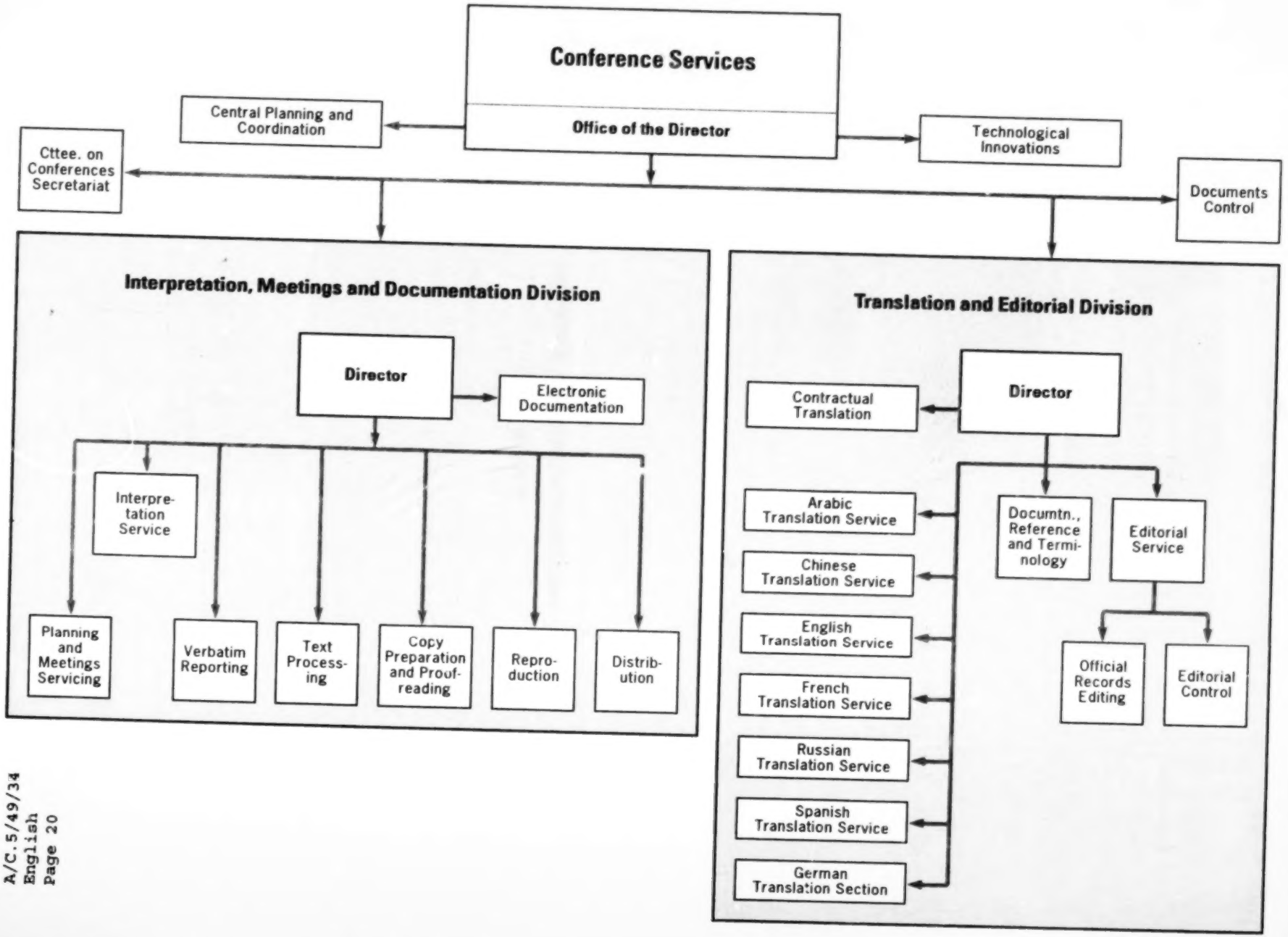
51. Although physical facilities were not specifically mentioned in the General Assembly resolution, the capacity to provide conference services is adversely affected by inadequate physical facilities for meetings. These include problems arising from the limited number of appropriate meeting rooms at Headquarters, the lack of electronic voting machines in some large meeting rooms, the need for upgrading of sound systems and the need for reconfiguration of meeting rooms to meet the changing requirements of intergovernmental bodies. There is also inadequate office space for conference-servicing staff.

Notes

1/ Official Records of the General Assembly, Forty-seventh Session, Supplement No. 6 (A/47/6/Rev.1), para. 39.4.

Annex I

CONFERENCE SERVICES ORGANIZATIONAL CHART


Conference Services
Office of the Director
Central Planning and Coordination
Technological Innovations
Cttee. on Conferences Secretariat
Documents Control
Interpretation, Meetings and Documentation Division
Director
Electronic Documentation
Interpre-tation Service
Planning and Meetings Servicing
Verbatim Reporting
Text Process-ing
Copy Preparation and Proof-reading
Repro-duction
Distrib-ution
Translation and Editorial Division
Director
Contractual Translation
Arabic Translation Service
Chinese Translation Service
English Translation Service
French Translation Service
Russian Translation Service
Spanish Translation Service
German Translation Section
Documtn., Reference and Termi-nology
Editorial Service
Official Records Editing
Editorial Control

Annex II

FIGURES

1. Comparison of output and resource levels for the bienniums 1984-1985 to 1992-1993

2. Contractual translation: distribution of work, 1992-1994

3. Meetings with verbatim records, 1990-1993

4. Meetings for which services could not be provided, 1990-1993

5. Interpreter assignments, 1991-1994

FIGURE 1
Comparison of output and resource levels
for the bienniums 1984–1985 to 1992–1993

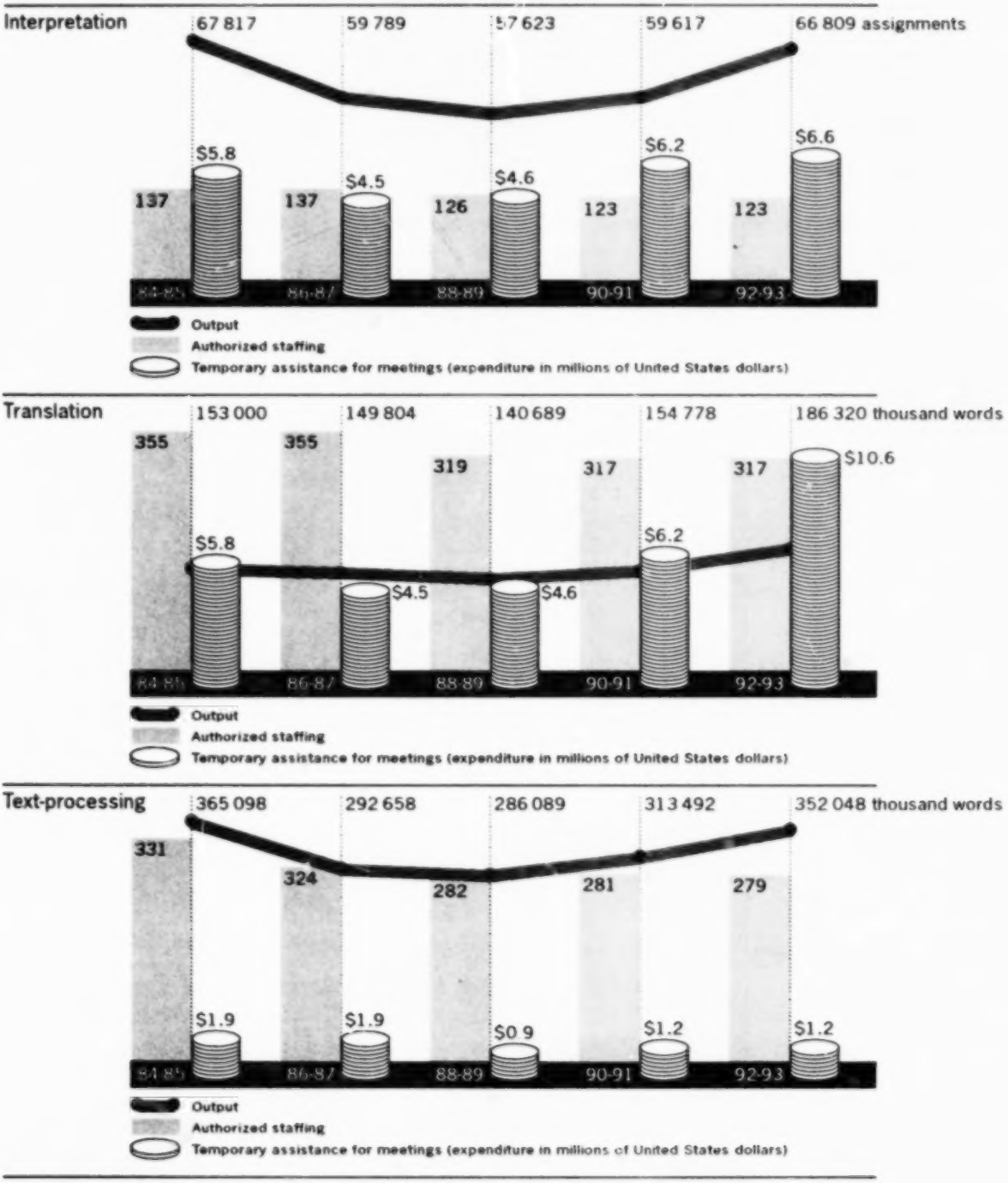


FIGURE 2
Contractual translation: distribution of work, 1992–1994

Percentage share

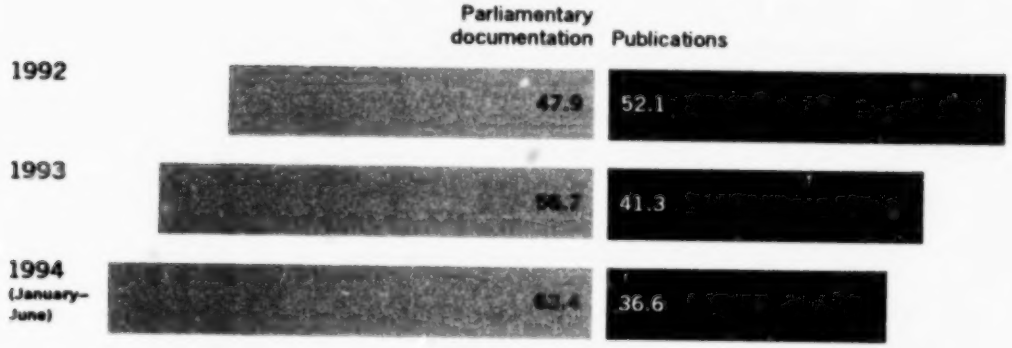


FIGURE 3
Meetings with verbatim records, 1990–1993

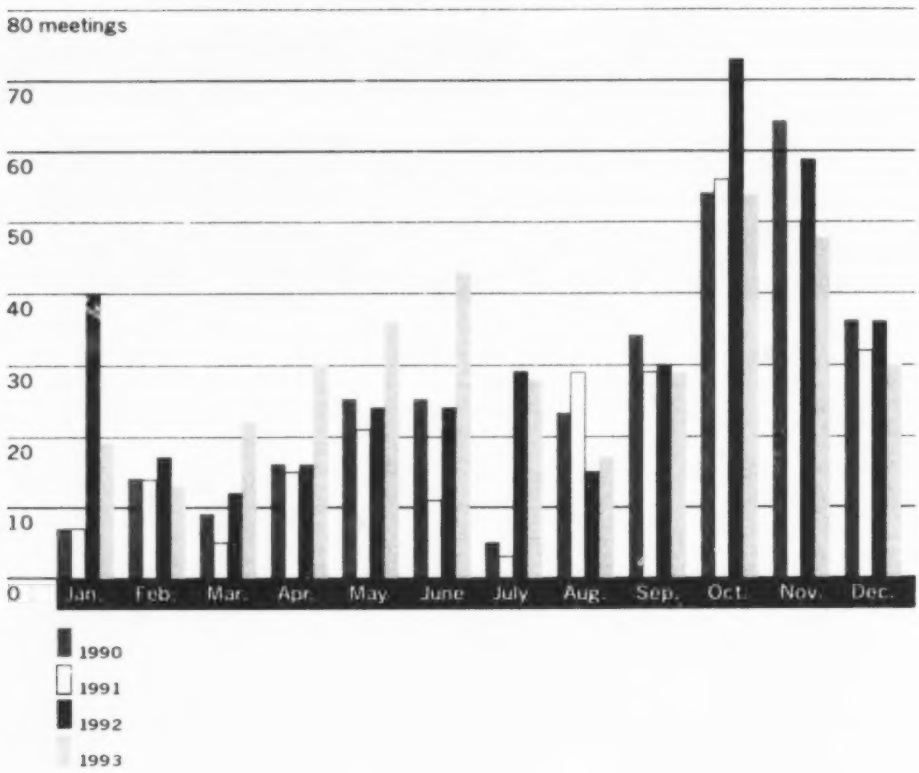


FIGURE 4
Meetings for which services could not be provided, 1990–1993
Cumulative number during year

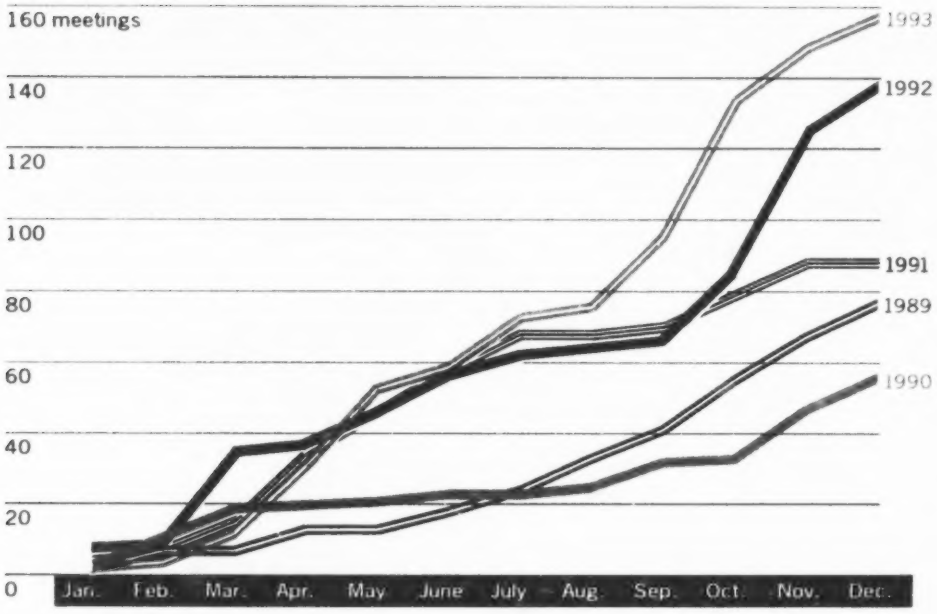


FIGURE 5
Interpreter assignments, 1991–1994